

TRANSLATIONS OF
EASTERN POETRY
AND PROSE

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A BATTLE-SCENE IN THE *SHĀHNĀMA*

TRANSLATIONS OF EASTERN POETRY AND PROSE

BY

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IN MEMORIAM
CAROLI JACOBI LYALL
POESEOS ARABICAE ANTIQUAE
EDITORIS DOCTISSIMI
INTERPRETIS ET INGENIO ET ARTE
PRAESTANTISSIMI

PREFACE

THIS book containing versions from about fifty authors may be of use to some who are interested in the two great literatures of Islam—Arabic and Persian. Theology, law, philosophy, science and medicine are scarcely touched, but the reader will learn something of Islamic history and religion, morals and manners, culture and character, something too of the heathen Arabs to whom Mohammed was sent. I have not, however, selected with a view to instruction. All the poetry and the chief part of the prose has been chosen for its merit as literature, and my choice was guided by the belief that translators do best in translating what they have enjoyed. If the present collection appeals in the first place to lovers of poetry and *belles lettres*, it has gained in solidity and range of interest by including passages from famous biographers and historians like Ibn Hishám, Mas'udí, Tabarí and Ibn Khaldun. The extracts, which are mostly short and seldom run beyond the five pages allowed by such a good judge as Mr A. R. Waller, cover a period of a thousand years from the beginning of the 6th to the end of the 15th century A.D. The arrangement is chronological, and in order to preserve the connexion of Persian with Arabian literary history Persian writers (distinguished by asterisks) keep their place in the series instead of being grouped apart.

As a rule the poetry has been turned into verse, which can give the artistic effect better than prose, though it cannot render the meaning so exactly¹. Yet the power of verse to

¹ Generally the verse translations are faithful without being literal, but in one piece from Imru' al-Qais and in a few from Hafiz I have taken the same kind of liberty which FitzGerald used in his version of Omar Khayyám.

fulfil its aim is limited by circumstances. While any poem can be reproduced in metre, few Arabic or Persian poems are wholly suitable for English verse: we must decide what to translate, and especially what *not* to translate, before considering how it shall be done. I disagree with the opinion that success may turn on the existence in the translator's language of a native form and manner corresponding, but undoubtedly advantage should be taken of such models when possible. For example, it seems to me that parts of the *Sháhnáma* have much in common with Scott's metrical romances, and that a version which recognises this affinity and avails itself of these associations is more likely to please the English reader than one which ignores them. Rhyme is an indispensable element in Arabic and Persian poetry, and there are other reasons why it should not be abandoned willingly by translators who use English metres. For one thing, unrhymed couplets soon become tedious, while in unconfined blank verse every trace of the original form disappears. Now and then I have copied the monorhyme of Oriental odes, but it is not easy to do so in poems of any length, nor is it worth the trouble. Far more depends on the choice of a metre consorting with the tone, spirit, and movement of the original. The scholarly version of the *Sháhnáma* by A. G. and E. Warner fails, I think, here. Admitting that the task of the translators was heavy enough to justify their refusal of rhyme, every one acquainted with the Persian must feel the difference between their sedate and slow-marching verse and the lively, rapid, and resonant metre in which Firdausí wrote¹.

¹ Professor Browne has published several very good specimens of translation in alliterative verse (*Literary History of Persia*, vol. I, pp. 140-150). I cannot help thinking, however, that this somewhat rude and archaic style is incapable of doing justice to the dignity and refinement of Firdausí's poem.

Sir Charles Lyall who about a year before his death honoured me by accepting the dedication of this book in token of my admiration for his renderings of the old Arabian poetry has imitated the Arabic metres with peculiar skill and some of my versions adopt the same method. These metres are quantitative while their equivalents in a European language must be accentual so that the English measure can only suggest the Oriental rhythm. Perhaps the specimens given below will serve to indicate how the two are related to each other. As regards the method itself experiment has convinced me that in Arabic at any rate a verse translation is more apt to convey the right impression when the original form is partially reproduced in this way. Besides as Sir Charles Lyall pointed out the accentual types of the *Tawil* and *Kamil* metres now belong to English poetry. Browning having employed them both sometimes regularly but oftener with variations in *Abt Vogler* and *Muléyleh*.

In selecting the five illustrations reproduced by Mr R. B. Fleming from manuscripts in the British Museum I sought the help and advice of my friend Mr Edward Edwards and I think it will be acknowledged that I have every reason to be grateful to him. The frontispiece (*Add* 27 257 f 445 a) depicts a battle between two Indian princes Gau and Talhand (*Shahnama* ed Macan iv 1737 foll.) but suits almost as well the poem on p. 97 where Unsuri describes a campaign of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna in which also elephants took part. Those numbered II, III and IV illustrate the same passages as the original miniatures (*Add* 18 188, f 183 a Or 1200 f 29 b and f 34 a). The first shows Rustam letting down a lasso to Bizhan in order to draw him out of his dungeon on the left of Rustam stands Manizha the heroine of Firdausi's tale. In III and IV we see an immortal character in Arabian fiction Abu Zaid of Saruj whose

adventures were written by Harírí The fifth illustration (*Or.* 4566, f. 6) is a portrait of the Persian mystic and poet, Farídu'ddín 'Attár This has a remarkable individuality, and though it cannot be contemporary with 'Attár I should like to believe that there is some genuine tradition behind it

I The *Tawíl* (Long) Metre

~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ ||
akamu | bam ummi | şudura | matıyıkum ||

~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ ||
fa'inmi | 'ila kaumin | sıwakum | la'amıyalı

Arise, O | my mother's sons, | and breast with | your steeds the night,

For truly | the love I bear | is kinder | to some less kin

~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ ||
tasamma | sururan ja | lulun mu | takharrişun ||

~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ ||
bı-fılı 'l- | bara hal fı 'l- | zamam | sururu

He gave to | himself the name | of Joy—fool | and liar he!

May earth stop | his mouth! In Time | is any | thing joyful?

II The *Kámil* (Perfect) Metre.

~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ ||
fa-wakaftu 'as | 'aluha wa-kai | fa su'aluna ||

~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ ||
şumman khawa | lida ma yabı | nu kalamuha

And I stopped to ask | whither gone are they?— | what avails to ask

Things hard of hear | ing and dark of speech | that abide unchanged?

III The *Wáfir* (Ample) Metre

~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ ||
fa-ma far'u 'l- | fatatı 'idha | tawarat ||

~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ | ~ ~ ~ ~ ||
bı-muftakırın | 'ila sarhın | wa-dafri

No need, when in earth | the maid rests cov | ered over,

No need for her locks | of hair to be loosed | and plaited

IV The *Bastī* (Wide) Metre

ma l khaīru ʔau | mun ʔadhu | bu l ʔa īmu | na lahu ||

wa la ʔala | tun wa la | ʔufun ala l | ʔasadi

Virtue is nei | ther a fast | consuming those | who it keep

Nor any off | ice of prayer | nor rough fleece wrapped | on the limbs

V The *Madīd* (Tall) Metre

hallati l kham | ru wa ka | nat ʔaraman ||

wa bi la ʔin | ma alam | mat tahallu

Lawful now to | me is wine | long forbidden

Sore the struggle | ere the ban | was o erridden

This rare measure is represented by a single example (No 16) which does not correspond very closely with the original

Many of the verse translations have appeared before and I wish to thank Messrs G Bell and Sons J M Dent and Sons T Fisher Unwin and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press for permission to reprint them Nearly all the prose versions are new of those in verse twenty five are now published for the first time Nos 7 11-15 19 20 25-29 31 34 37 38 55 63 143-148 In an appendix I have supplied references to the Arabic and Persian texts from which the versions were made Though specialists will find in this anthology much that is well known to them it includes comparatively few pieces that were already translated into English by other hands

REYNOLD A NICHOLSON

December 1921

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF AUTHORS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Abu 'l-'Ala al-Ma'arrí <i>See</i> Ma'arrí</p> <p>Abu 'l-'Atahíya (Nos 36, 37)</p> <p>Abu 'l-Baka of Ronda (No 149)</p> <p>Abú Nuwás (Nos 27-35)</p> <p>*Abú Sa'íd ibn Abi 'l-Khair
(Nos 66-72)</p> <p>*Abu Zurá'a of Jurján (No 59)</p> <p>*'Am'ak of Bukhárá (No 117)</p> <p>'Amr son of Kulthum (No 9)</p> <p>*Anwarí (Nos 118, 119)</p> <p>*'Aṭṭar (Nos 120-122)</p> <p>*Bábá Kuhlí of Shíráz (No 73)</p> <p>*Dakíkí (No 60)</p> <p>Farazdak (No 26)</p> <p>Fari'a daughter of Ṭaríf (No 38)</p> <p>*Farídu'ddín 'Aṭṭár <i>See</i> 'Aṭṭár
al-Find (No 2)</p> <p>*Firdausí (No 63)</p> <p>*Háfiz (Nos 150-163)</p> <p>Harírí (Nos 112, 113)</p> <p>Ibnu 'l-'Arabí (Nos 127-131)</p> <p>*Ibnu 'l-Balkhí (No 114)</p> <p>Ibnu 'l-Farid (Nos 123-126)</p> <p>Ibn Hishám (Nos 39, 40)</p> <p>Ibn Khaldun (Nos 164-168)</p> <p>Imra'u 'l-Kais (Nos 5-7)</p> <p>Jahdar son of Dubaí'a (No 3)</p> <p>Jáhiz (Nos 41-44)</p> | <p>*Jalálu'ddín Rúmí <i>See</i> Rúmí</p> <p>*Jámí (Nos 169-175)</p> <p>Jamíl (No 23)</p> <p>Ka'b son of Zuhair (No 21)</p> <p>Khansá (Nos 19, 20)</p> <p>*Kisá'í of Merv (Nos 61, 62)</p> <p>Labíd (Nos 11-15)</p> <p>Ma'arrí (Nos 74-111)</p> <p>Maisun (No 22)</p> <p>*Masrur ibn Muhammad of Ṭalakhán
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|--|--|

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TRANSLATIONS OF EASTERN POETRY AND PROSE

MURRA OF SHAIBÁN

SOME of the oldest Arabic poems that have come down to us are connected with the War of Basus which broke out in the early years of the sixth century A.D. between the brother tribes of Bakr and Taghlib. Murra belonged to Shaiban, a subdivision of Bakr. He had a son Jassás and a daughter Halila who was married to Kulaib, the chief of Taghlib. Jassás quarrelled with Kulaib and murdered him. At first Murra was for surrendering his guilty son, but when the elders of Shaibán resolved to fight rather than give him up, Murra turned to him and said

I

If war thou hast wrought and brought on me
No laggard I with arms outworn
Whate'er betide I make to flow
The baneful cups of death at morn

When spear heads clash my wounded man
Is forced to drag the spear he stained
Never I reck if war must be
What Destiny hath preordained

Donning war's harness I will strive
To fend from me the shame that sears
Already I thrill and my lust is roused
For the shock of the horsemen against the spears!

AL-FIND

WHEN war began the other clans of Bakr held aloof, deeming Shaibán in the wrong, until an event happened which caused them to rise as one man. Bujair, the nephew of Hárith ibn Ubád, was treacherously slain by Muhallil, Kulaib's brother, notwithstanding that Hárith and his family had hitherto taken no part in the struggle. On hearing this Hárith declared that if vengeance were satisfied by the death of Bujair, he would be content, but

Muhalhil replied, "I have only taken satisfaction for Kulaib's shoe-latchet" Then Hárith sprang up in wrath, crying:

"God knows, I kindled not this fire, although
I am burned in it to-day
A lord for a shoe's latchet is too dear
To horse! To horse! Away!"

And al-Find said on the same occasion.

2

We spared the Banú Hind¹ and said, "Our brothers they remain

It may be Time will make of us one people yet again"
But when the wrong grew manifest, and naked Ill stood plain,
And naught was left but violence, we paid them bane for bane
As lions marched we forth to war in rage and fierce disdain,
Our swords brought widowhood and tears and wailing in
their train,

Our spears dealt gashes wide whence blood like water spilled
amain

No way but force to weaken force and mastery obtain;
'Tis wooing contumely to meet wild actions with humane.
By evil thou mayst win to peace when good is tried in vain

JAHDAR SON OF DUBAI'A

At last the Bakrites prepared for a decisive battle, shaved their heads, and vowed to conquer or die Jahdar son of Dubai'a was an ill-favoured dwarfish man with fair flowing love-locks, and he said, "O my people, if ye shave my head, ye will disfigure me Leave my locks for the first horseman of Taghlib that shall ride forth from the glen to-morrow (I will answer for him)", and he chanted these verses:

3

To wife and daughter
Henceforth I am dead.
Dust for ointment
On my hair is shed

¹ Hind was the mother of Bakr and Taghlib, after whom the two tribes descended from them are named Here "Banu Hind" (the sons of Hind) refers to the Taghlibites

Let me close with the horsemen
Who hither ride!
Shear my locks from me
If I stand aside!

Well wots a mother
If the son she bore
And swaddled on her bosom
And smelt him o'er

Whenever warriors
In the mellay meet
Is a puny weakling
Or a man complete!

MUHALHIL SON OF RABÍ A

HE was the brother of Kulaib and succeeded him as chief of Taghlib

4

O night we are passing at Dhu Husum shine forth into dawn
when thou art ended and return not!

If my night at al Dhana'ib hath been long¹ yet was I used
to weep for the shortness of the night

Meseems the Kid the Kid of the Wain sinks prone on his
forelegs in a rolling sky

Whilst Sirius and his twin star creep towards Canopus which
gleams like the crown of an aged camel

Were the graveyards dug up so that Kulaib might be un-
covered and know at al Dhaná'ib what a visitor of
women

I proved myself on the day of al Shu batán his eye would be
gladdened—but how shall we meet them that are under
the tombs?

And lo at Wáridat I have left Bujair in a flow of blood like
the unguent mixed with saffron

¹ Because it was a night of memories and of sighs. The grave of Kulaib was at al Dhaná'ib in the north-eastern borders of Najd (*Aghāni* IV 142)

Kulaib's said to have applied these words to his brother of whose warlike prowess he had no high opinion

By slaying him I tore the tents of the Banú 'Ubád and some
 deed of violence is most healing to stricken hearts
 Albeit he doth not pay fully for Kulaib, such a man as my
 brother was when the women rush forth from their
 bowers¹
 And Hammám son of Murra him too we have left low, over
 him the huge male vulture,
 Heaving up his breast in which the spear is fixed, while
 another great brute like a camel is tugging at him
 And were it not for the wind, those in Hajr would be made
 to hear the clang of helmets smitten by our swordblades
 My life for the Banú Shakíka² the day they came like lions
 of the jungle that persevered in roaring,
 As though their spears were the ropes of a deep well whose
 walls are wide apart³,
 On the morn when beside 'Unaiza we and the sons of our
 father⁴ were (grinding one another) as two mill-stones
 turned by hand,
 And our horses standing over them all day, the horses
 (sweating) as though washed in a water-pool⁵

IMRA'U 'L-KAIS

AUTHOR of the most famous of the *Mu'allakát* He was a grandson of King Hárith of Kinda His father, Hujr, ruled for some time over the Banú Asad in central Arabia, and when they revolted and put him to death, Imra'u 'l-Kais came forward to avenge him After many adventures, he set out for Constantinople, where he was honourably received by the Emperor Justinian He died on his way back, about A D 540 The cause of his death is said to have been a poisoned robe sent to him by Justinian, with whose daughter he had an intrigue Imra'u 'l-Kais is the oldest of the great Arabian poets and the mightiest in genius His daring images and exquisitely worded pictures of life in the desert set

¹ On the approach of the enemy

² The Taghlibites

³ *I e* their spears were long and straight (like the rope or cord by which a bucket is let down into a well) and numerous (because in a wide well there is room for many ropes) Another point of comparison is that spears draw blood as ropes draw water

⁴ The Bakri'es See p 2, note 1

⁵ *I e* "We pursued them hotly and stripped the dead at our leisure "

the translator a hard task which the state of the text only makes harder. The first specimen given here belongs to the *Mu allaka* the second is a very free and the third a more literal rendering of passages in two of the minor odes

5

How many a noble tent hath oped its treasure
 To me and I have ta'en my fill of pleasure
 Passing the warders who with eager speed
 Had slain me if they might but hush the deed
 What time in heaven the Pleiades unfold
 A belt of orient gems distinct with gold!
 I entered. By the curtain there stood she
 Clad lightly as for sleep and looked on me
 By God she cried what reck's thee of the cost?
 I see thine ancient madness is not lost
 I led her forth she trailing as we go
 Her brodered skirt lest any footprint show
 Until beyond the tents the valley sank
 With curving dunes and many a piled bank
 Toward me I drew her then by side locks both
 Nor she—full ankled fine of waist—was loth
 Fair in her colour splendid in her grace
 Her bosom smooth as mirror's polished face
 A white pale virgin pearl such lustre keeps
 Fed with clear water in untrodden deeps
 Half turned away a slant soft cheek and eye
 Of timid antelope with fawn close by
 She lets appear and lo the shapely neck
 Not bare of ornament else without a fleck
 Whilst from her shoulders in profusion fair,
 Like clusters on the palm down falls her coal dark hair

6

Love that wellnigh had ceased from welling,
 Love rose high in my heart again
 For Sulaimà down in Arar dwelling
 When Tamar's rills were alive with rain

Oh, I see thee, Kinána's daughter,
 And the howdahs in the mist of dawn
 Gliding by, like ships on water
 They passed and thou wert gone!
 Like tall palms undeflowered,
 For the sword of their clan is drawn
 Until their maiden
 Boughs be laden
 With ripe yellow bunches and lowered,
 A wonder to look upon!
 Proudly the sons of Rabdá ride
 At harvest-tide

But the women those howdahs nestled,
 More fair seemed they
 Than statues, on marble chiselled,
 Of Sukf, in the valley where Sájúm
 Foams to the Persian bay
 Safely fended,
 Softly tended,
 With pearls and rubies and beads of gold
 And gums of delicate odour in pyxes old,
 Spicy musk and aloes and myrrh
 Sweet, oh, sweet is the breath of her
 Who stole from thee, Sulaimà, my love away

The cord is cut asunder that tied me so true of yore,
 When darting a covert eye to thy tent close-veiled
 I saw thee and paled
 And trembled at the sight,
 As one trembles who overnight
 Drank deep, and in the morning his cup is filled once more

7

(Metre *Tawíl*)

And oft in the early morn, when birds in their nests are still,
 I ride whither he that comes to forage must fare alone
 A spring-paſture, one kept safe by spear-heads in watch and
 ward,

And rich with the floods poured forth from many a black
storm cloud—

On stout mare a bay whose flesh her running made dry and
tough

As though twere so hard is it the staff of a weaver's beam
I scared once with her a herd of wild kine their skins pure
white

Unblemished their legs bestriped like needle wrought
Yemen robes

Meseemed as they sped their pace and trotted I saw a troop
Of horses that wheel about with glistening saddle cloths
So wheeled they and set on guard behind them a lusty bull
Of long back and horn his nose turns upward his tail
sweeps low,

Whilst I in pursuit bore on against bull and cow alike
And bent to the chase what time I followed it all my mind
As swift as an eagle swoops and softly her wings draws in
To snatch in the morning shine a hare on Sherabba's height—
Her eyrie around lie fresh and shrivelled the hearts of birds
As though the jujube's red fruit were mingled with crumbling
dates—

The foxes that haunt Arwāl have slunk to their holes in fear
So under me flew the steed I hastened with hand and thighs

Were that after which I strive my bare need to live withal
For me were a little wealth enough I would seek no more,
But after renown I strive a firm glory rooted deep
And men such as I may win the glory most deep and firm
How long in a man soe'er the breath of his spirit lasts
He never will reach the end of craving or cease from toil

TARAFĀ

He took part it is said in the War of Basus and afterwards visited the court of Hīra (near ancient Babylon) the capital of the Lakhmite kingdom. He had a bitter tongue and some verses spoken by him so enraged Amr ibn Hind the King of Hīra (A.D. 554-569) that he sent Tarafa to the governor of Bahrain with a sealed letter containing orders to kill him. The following lines from his *Mu'allaka* illustrate the pre-Islamic view of life as

well as the character of the poet who was cut off in the flower of his days

8

Canst thou make me immortal, O thou that blamest me so
For haunting the battle and loving the pleasures that fly?
If thou hast not the power to ward me from Death, let me go
To meet him and scatter the wealth in my hand, ere I die

Save only for three things in which noble youth take delight,
I care not how soon rises o'er me the coronach loud.

Wine that foams when the water is poured on it, ruddy, not
bright,

Dark wine that I quaff stol'n away from the cavilling crowd,

And then my fierce charge to the rescue on back of a mare
Wide-stepping as wolf I have startled where thirsty he cowers,
And third, the day-long with a lass in her tent of goat's hair
To hear the wild rain and beguile of their slowness the hours¹.

'AMR SON OF KULTHÚM

CHIEF of the tribe of Taghlib In his *Mu'allaka* he addresses
'Amr ibn Hind, the King of Hira, in terms of defiance and warns
the foes of Taghlib that they will meet more than their match

9

Up, maiden! Fetch the morning-drink and spare not

The wine of Andarín,

Clear wine that takes a saffron hue when water

Is mingled warm therein

The lover tasting it forgets his passion,

His heart is eased of pain,

The stingy miser, as he lifts the goblet,

Regardeth not his gain

Pass round from left to right! Why lett'st thou, maiden,

Me and my comrades thirst?

¹ For the translation of this verse I am indebted to Mr Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, in whose beautiful version of the *Mu'allakat* it is rendered thus

"And third, to lie the day-long, while wild clouds are wildering, close
in her tent of goat's hair, the dearest beloved of me"

Yet am I whom thou wilt not serve this morning
 Of us three not the worst!
 Many a cup in Baalbec and Damascus
 And Kásirin I drained
 Howbeit we ordained to death shall one day
 Meet death to us ordained

* * * *

And oh my love and yearning when at nightfall
 I saw her camels haste
 Until sharp peaks uptowered like serried swordblades
 And me Yamáma faced¹!
 Such grief no mother camel feels bemoaning
 Her young one lost nor she
 The grey haired woman whose hard fate hath left her
 Of nine sons graves thrice three

* * * *

Father of Hind take heed and ere thou movest
 Rashly against us learn
 That still our banners go down white to battle
 And home blood red return
 And many a chief bediadem'd the champion
 Of the outlaws of the land
 Have we o'erthrown and stripped him whilst around him
 Fast reined the horses stand
 Our neighbours lopped like thorn trees snarls in terror
 Of us the demon hound²
 Never we try our handmill on the foemen
 But surely they are ground
 We are the heirs of glory all Ma add knows³
 Our lances it defend
 And when the tent pole tumbles in the foray
 Trust us to save our friend!

* * * *

¹ Here the poet describes his grief at the departure of his beloved whom he sees in imagination reaching her journey's end in distant Yamáma

Hind was the name of Amr's mother and also of his daughter

² Even the *Jinn* (spirits) stand in awe of us
 Ma add signifies the Arabs in general excluding Yemen

O 'Amr, what mean'st thou? Are we, we of Taghlíb,
 Thy princeling's retinue?
 O 'Amr, what mean'st thou, rating us and hearkening
 To tale-bearers untrue?
 O 'Amr, ere thee full many a time our spear-shaft
 Hath baffled foes to bow
 Nipped in the vice, it kicks like a wild camel
 That will no touch allow
 Like a wild camel, so it creaks in bending
 And splits the bender's brow!

* * * * *

Well know, when our tents rise along their valleys,
 The men of every clan
 That we give death to them that durst attempt us,
 To friends what food we can,
 That staunchly we maintain a cause we cherish,
 Camp where we choose to ride,
 Nor will we aught of peace, when we are angered,
 Till we be satisfied
 We keep our vassals safe and sound, but rebels
 We soon force to their knees,
 And if we reach a well, we drink pure water,
 Others the muddy lees
 Ours is the earth and all thereon when *we* strike,
 There needs no second blow,
 Kings lay before the new-weaned boy of Taghlíb
 Their heads in homage low
 We are called oppressors, being none, but shortly
 A true name shall it be!¹
 We have so filled the earth, 'tis narrow for us,
 And with our ships the sea!

ZUHAIR

THE War of Dáhus was between the tribes of 'Abs and Dhubyán
 After it had continued for many years, two chieftains of Dhubyán
 —Harim son of Sinán and Hárith son of 'Auf—paid over to the

¹ *I.e.* we will show our enemies that we cannot be defied with impunity

Absites the sum of blood money to which they were entitled on account of the greater number who had fallen on their side and so peace was concluded. The *Mu allaka* of Zuhair celebrates this act of munificence and urges the tribesmen to forgive and forget

10

Noble pair of Ghaiz ibn Murra¹ well ye laboured to restore
Ties of kindred hewn asunder by the bloody strokes of war
Witness now mine oath the ancient House² in Mecca's
hallowed bound

Which its builders of Kuraish and Jurhum solemnly went
round³

That in hard or easy issue never wanting were ye found!
Peace ye gave to Abs and Dhubyân when each fell by
other's hand

And the evil fumes they pestled up between them filled the
land

* * * * *

Will ye hide from God the guilt ye dare not unto Him
disclose?

Verily what thing soever ye would hide from God He knows
Either meanwhile 'tis laid by within a scroll and treasured
there

For the day of retribution or avenged all unaware
War ye have known and war have tasted not by hearsay are
ye wise

Raise no more the hideous monster! If ye let her raven
she cries

Ravenously for blood and crushes like a mill stone all below
And from her twin conceiving womb she brings forth woe
on woe

* * * * *

I am weary of life's burden well a man may weary be
After eighty years and thus much now is manifest to me
Death is like a night blind camel stumbling on the smitten
die

And the others wax in age and weakness whom he goeth by

¹ Ancestor of Harim and Hârith

² The Ka ba

³ This refers to the religious circumambulation (*tawâf*)

What to-day is passing, that I know, and yesterday what
 passed,
 But the fortune of to-morrow I am blind and cannot cast
 He that deals with folk unkindly and would spurn them,
 underneath
 They will trample him and make him feel the sharpness of
 their teeth
 He that hath enough and over and is niggard of his pelf
 Will be hated of his people and left free to praise himself
 He alone who with fair actions ever fortifies his fame
 Wins it fully shame will find him out unless he shrink from
 shame
 He that for his cistern's guarding trusts not in his own stout
 aim
 Sees it ruined he must harm his foe or he must suffer harm
 He that fears the bridge of death across it at the last is driven,
 Though he span as with a ladder all the space 'twixt earth
 and heaven

LABÍD

LABÍD witnessed the coming of the Prophet and accepted Islam,
 but his poems (in which a religious feeling often shows itself)
 belong to the time when he was still a heathen. Being the work
 of "a true desert dweller," they have a freshness and delicacy
 that owe as much to nature as to art. From the opening verses
 of his *Mu'allaka*, translated in No. 11, readers can see how a
 typical Arabian ode begins: almost invariably the prelude recalls
 a love-romance and describes its scene: the spot where the bard's
 mistress had once camped with her folk until they again set forth
 on their wanderings.

11

(Metre *Kámul*)

Waste lies the land they are gone who lighted and dwelt
 awhile
 In Miná all desolate now Rujám and Ghawl are lone
 And the slopes of Raiyán, bare are they not a sign of man
 But is weather-worn as the writing scored on the broad
 flagstones

Dim relics over them since the sojourners knew them rolled
 Of years a many in war and pleasure and holy peace
 With the stars spring rains they were blessed abundantly
 thunder clouds
 Gushed down in floods on them followed next by the
 drizzling falls—
 Ay clouds of night time clouds of morning, and clouds
 of eve
 Spreading darkness wide and afar and answering boom with
 boom
 Here flowers the rocket and here the ostrich and antelope
 'Tis so wild and still on the wadi sides bring forth their young,
 And gazelles large eyed stand quiet over the suckling fawns
 While around them gather in troops the weaned ones free
 to stray
 O'er the dust grey camp have the torrents swept and have
 limned it plain
 As a scroll just fresh from the pen its lines all fair and new
 Or as traceries on a woman's wrist a tattoo of rings
 Pricked in with powdery soot the pattern sticks off distinct
 And I stopped to ask whither gone are they?—what avails
 to ask
 Things hard of hearing and dark of speech that abide un-
 changed?

12

(Metre *Wafir*)

So made I an end When cares pressed thick upon me
 And love turned backward after the tryst and meeting
 I severed the cords thereof and away I wandered
 On camel so fleet and strong she could ne'er be weary
 A stark beast—high she tosses her pair of riders—
 Yet shrunk and worn with me on and off the saddle
 She stands as a castle built by a master builder
 Of Hájr with stones alike each fitted squarely
 A wild bull she¹ a brisk one on whom the night long
 It rained in a pebbly upland in Burka Wáhif

¹ He compares his camel for her speed to a wild bull i.e. an oryx which he proceeds to describe

Who strayed from his herd, and storm-clouds entertained him
 With big drops plashing, driven as the north-wind listed.
 He shelters in brakes of thorn and in lotus thickets,
 Alone as the hermit vowed to fulfil a penance,
 And when on his back the soaked boughs drip their burden,
 He moves to and fro his horn, head and shoulder stooping,
 As though 'twere a smith bent over the work before him,
 To burnish away rust-stains on the sword of iron
 With sunrise comes the pack on him, lop-eared buckhounds,
 The eagerest running swiftly beside the horsemen
 He wheels, not in craven flight, but as oft in honour
 A proud knight turns at bay and hies on to battle,
 And Mulham is down, the rest beaten off, and crimson
 The flanks of Tihál the brach, for the bull hath gored her
 With many a slanting thrust of his horn he riddles
 Her side as a cobbler's awl rips through the shoe-soles
 Then quits he the field, the rain-floods ebbing round him
 He goes like a race-horse covered with cloths, no faster,
 And makes for a winding gully, and now he ambles,
 And now he puts forth the utmost of speed, unsparing
 His fore-feet cleave the shrub-sown sands of Dahná
 As players for stakes who rummage amidst a sand-heap¹
 He crosses the plain, alone, in his morning glory,
 As bright as the blade of sword that is newly polished

(Metre *Tawil*)

13

O Maiya, arise amidst the keeners and wail for him
 That built for himself renown, a man that was loved and
 feared!
 And cry unto God, "Oh, take not Arbad afar from us²,"
 And shatter thy grief-riven heart with mention of his dear
 name
 A stout pillar to his folk they leaned on him then came
 Doom,
 And one day they marked for him a place in the earth to lie

¹ This refers to the game called *fayḍ* or *fiyāl* in which a heap of sand, after something had been hidden in it, was divided into two portions, then one player asked the other to guess which portion contained the thing that had been hidden

² Maiya was Labíd's daughter, Arbad his brother

14

O maiden weep for Arbad wherever his clanfolk meet
 For he was the stranger's lodging and the starveling's safe
 retreat
 Our stay on a sunless winter day when rushed from the
 north a storm
 And the gamblers shared their gains while cowered in their
 shielings the churls wrapt warm

(Metre *Tawil*)

15

What here will a man devise to seek after? Ask him ye!
 A vow that he may fulfil? or some idle errant thought?
 The snares on his path are spread encompassing him if he
 Unstricken escape the snares yet soon shall his strength be
 naught

He journeys the whole night long and saith in his heart
 Tis done

Albeit a living man is ne'er done with toil and pain
 Say ye when he portions out what now he shall do or shun
 Bereaved may thy mother be! Hath Time preached to thee
 in vain?

TA'ABBATA SHARRÀ

THÁBIT son of Jábír nicknamed Ta abbata Sharrà was a brigand and outlaw who lived in the last decades before Islam. Both he and his comrade Shanfarà were excellent poets. The poem translated below is Ta abbata's masterpiece: there are versions of it by Goethe, Ruckert, and Sir Charles Lyall. The author tells how he avenged his uncle slain by the tribesmen of Hudhail; he describes the dead man's heroic character, the foray in which he fell, his former victories over the same enemy, and finally the vengeance taken for him.

(Metre *Madid*)

16

In the glen there a murdered man is lying—
 Not in vain for vengeance his blood is crying •
 He hath left me the load to bear and departed
 I take up the load and bear it true hearted

I, his sister's son, the bloodshed inherit,
 I whose knot none looses, stubborn of spirit,
 Glowering darkly, shame's deadly outwiper,
 Like the serpent spitting venom, the viper

Hard the tidings that befell us, heart-breaking,
 Little seemed thereby the anguish most aching
 Fate hath robbed me still is Fate fierce and froward
 Of a hero whose friend ne'er called him coward
 As the warm sun was he in wintry weather,
 'Neath the Dog-star shade and coolness together,
 Spare of flank, yet this in him showed not meanness,
 Open-hearted, full of boldness and keenness,
 Firm of purpose, cavalier unaffrighted
 Courage rode with him and with him alighted,
 In his bounty a bursting cloud of rain-water,
 Lion grim when he leaped to the slaughter
 Flowing hair, long robe his folk saw aforetime,
 But a lean-haunched wolf was he in war-time
 Savours two he had, untasted by no men
 Honey to his friends and gall to his foemen
 Fear he rode, nor recked what should betide him
 Save his deep-notched Yemen blade, none beside him.

Oh, the warriors girt with swords good for slashing,
 Like the levin, when they drew them, outflashing!
 Through the noonday heat they fared then, benighted,
 Farther fared, till at dawning they alighted
 Breaths of sleep they sipped, and then, whilst they nodded,
 Thou didst scare them lo, they scattered and scudded
 Vengeance wreaked we upon them, unforgiving
 Of the two clans scarce was left a soul living¹

Ay, if *they* bruised his glaive's edge, 'twas in token
 That by him many a time their own was broken
 Oft he made them kneel down by force and cunning
 Kneel on jags where the foot is torn with running
 Many a morn in shelter he took them napping,
 After killing, was the rieving and rapine

¹ Although the poet's uncle was slain in this onslaught, the surprised party suffered severely "The two clans" belonged to the great tribe of Hudhail, which is mentioned in the penultimate verse

They have gotten of me a roasting—I tire not
 Of desiring them till me they desire not
 First of foemen's blood my spear deeply drinketh
 Then a second time deep in it sinketh
 Lawful now to me is wine long forbidden¹
 Sore my struggle ere the ban was overriden
 Pour me wine O son of Amr! I would taste it
 Since with grief for mine uncle I am wasted
 O'er the fallen of Hudhail stands screaming
 The hyena see the wolf's teeth gleaming!
 Dawn will hear the flap of wings will discover
 Vultures treading corpses too gorged to hover

SHANFARÀ

His *Lâmīyatu l Arab* (the Arabian Ode rhyming in *l*) is justly celebrated. It begins with a passage addressed to his kinsfolk bidding them depart and leave him to consort with a few desperate bandits like himself

17

(Metre *Tawīl*)

Arise O my mother's sons and breast with your steeds the
 night
 For truly the love I bear is kinder to some less kin
 'Tis all ready that ye want for going your ways aright
 The saddles on girths tied fast and moonlight to journey in
 And somewhere the noble find a refuge afar from scathe
 The outlaw a lonely spot where no fires of hatred burn
 Oh never a prudent man night faring in hope or fear
 Hard pressed on the face of earth but still he hath room
 to turn

To me now in your default are comrades a wolf untired
 A sleek leopard and a fell hyena with shaggy mane²

¹ It was customary for the avenger to take a solemn vow that he would drink no wine before accomplishing his vengeance

The poet appears to mean that he has three friends who resemble these animals but it is curious as Prof Bevan remarks that an Arab should compare his friend to a hyena

True comrades. they ne'er let out the secret in trust with
 them,
 Nor basely forsake their friend because that he brought them
 bane

And each is a gallant heart and eager at honour's call,
 Yet I, when the foremost charge, am bravest of all the brave,
 But if they with hands outstretched are seizing the booty won,
 The slowest am I whenas most quick is the greedy knave

By naught but my generous will I rise to the height of worth
 Above them, and sure the best is he with the will to give
 Yea, well I am rid of those that pay not a kindness back,
 Of whom I have no delight, though neighbours to me they live

18

Bury me not! Me ye are forbidden to bury,
 But thou, Ummu 'Āmir¹, soon wilt feast and make merry,
 When foes bear away my head, wherein is the best of me,
 And leave on the battle-field for thee all the rest of me.
 Here nevermore I hope to live glad a stranger
 Accurst, whose wild deeds have brought his people in danger.

KHANSĀ

AMONGST the Arabian women who have excelled in poetry, especially in elegiac verse, the first place belongs to Khansā. Her proper name was Tumādir. She flourished in the age of heathendom but outlived it. In the dirges which she composed on her brothers, Mu'āwiya and Sakhr, depth of feeling is united with a noble simplicity of expression.

19

Tears, ere thy death, for many a one I shed,
 But thine are all my tears since thou art dead.
 To comforters I lend my ear apart,
 While pain sits ever closer to my heart

¹ Ummu 'Āmir, i.e. "mother of 'Āmir," is a name given to the hyena

(Metre *Wafir*)

20

When night draws on remembering keeps me wakeful
 And hinders my rest with grief upon grief returning
 For Sakhr What a man was he on the day of battle
 When snatching their chance, they swiftly exchange the
 spear thrusts!

Ah never of woe like this in the world of spirits
 I heard or of loss like mine in the heart of woman
 What Fortune might send none stronger than he to bear it,
 None better to meet the trouble with mind unshaken
 The kindest to help wherever the need was sorest
 They all had of him a boon—wife friend and suitor
 O Sakhr! I will ne er forget thee until in dying
 I part from my soul and earth for my tomb is cloven
 The rise of the sun recalls to me Sakhr my brother
 And him I remember also at every sunset

KA'B SON OF ZUHAIR

His father was the famous poet Zuhair son of Abu Sulmà (see p 10 *supra*) When his kinsfolk became Moslems Ka b retorted by satirising the Prophet who thereupon condemned him to death He embraced Islam obtained a pardon and recited the following ode in praise of Mohammed The Prophet was so pleased with it that he bestowed his own mantle on the author

21

Su'ád is gone and to day my heart is love sick in thrall to
 her unrequited bound with chains
 And Su'ád when she came forth on the morn of departure
 was but as a gazelle with bright black downcast eyes
 When she smiles she lays bare a shining row of side teeth
 that seems to have been bathed once and twice in
 (fragrant) wine—
 Wine mixed with pure cold water from a pebbly hollow
 where the north wind blows in a bend of the valley
 From which the winds drive away every speck of dust and
 it brims over with white foamed torrents fed by showers
 gushing from a cloud of morn

Oh, what a rare mistress were she, if only she were true to
 her promise and would hearken to good advice!¹
 But hers is a love in whose blood are mingled paining and
 lying and faithlessness and inconstancy
 She is not stable in her affection even as ghouls change the
 hues of their garments
 And she does not hold to her plighted word otherwise than
 as sieves hold water
 The promises of 'Urkúb were a parable of her, and his
 promises were naught but vanity
 I hope and expect that women will ever be ready to keep
 their word, but never, methinks, are they ready
 Let not the wishes she inspired and the promises she made
 beguile thee lo, these wishes and dreams are a delusion.
 In the evening Su'ád came to a land whither none is brought
 save by camels that are excellent and noble and fleet
 To bring him there, he wants a stout she-camel which, though
 fatigued, loses not her wonted speed and pace,
 One that largely bedews the bone behind her ear when she
 sweats, one that sets herself to cross a trackless unknown
 wilderness,
 Scanning the high grounds with eyes keen as those of a
 solitary white oryx, when stony levels and sand-hills are
 kindled (by the sun),
 Big in the neck, fleshy in the hock, surpassing in her make
 the other daughters of the sire,
 Thick-necked, full-cheeked, robust, male-like, her flanks
 wide, her front (tall) as a milestone,
 Whose tortoise-shell skin is not pierced at last even by a lean
 (hungry) tick on the outside of her back,
 A hardy beast whose brother is her sire by a noble dam, and
 her sire's brother is her dam's brother, a long-necked
 one and nimble
 The *kurád*¹ crawls over her then her smooth breast and
 flanks cause it to slip off
 Onager-like is she, her side slabbed with firm flesh, her
 elbow-joint² far removed from the ribs,

c ¹ A large species of tick

² I.e. the middle joint of the foreleg

Her nose aquiline in her generous ears are signs of breeding
 plain for the expert to see, and in her cheeks smoothness
 Her muzzle juts out from her eyes and throat as though it
 were a pick axe

She lets a tail like a leafless palm branch with small tufts of
 hair hang down over a sharp edged (unrounded) udder
 from which its teats do not take away (milk) little by
 little¹

Though she be not trying she races along on light slender
 feet that skim the ground as they fall

With tawny hock tendons—feet that leave the gravel scat-
 tered and are not shod so that they should be kept safe
 from the blackness of the heaped stones

The swift movement of her forelegs when she sweats and
 the mirage enfolds the hills—

On a day when the chameleon basks in some high spot until
 its exposed part is baked as in fire

And the grey cicadas having begun to hop on the gravel the
 camel driver bids his companions take the siesta—

Resembles the beating of hand on hand by a bereaved grey
 haired woman who rises to lament and is answered by
 those who have lost many a child

One wailing shrilly her arms weak who had no under-
 standing when news was brought of the death of her
 unwedded son

She tears her breast with her hands while her tunic is rent
 in pieces from her collar bones

The fools walk on both sides of my camel saying Verily
 O grandson of Abu Sulmà thou art as good as slain

And every friend of whom I was hopeful said I will not
 help thee out I am too busy to mind thee

I said Let me go my way may ye have no father! for
 whatever the Merciful hath decreed shall be done²

Every son of woman long though his safety be one day is
 borne upon a gibbous bier

¹ I.e. she is a camel for riding not for milking

² Referring to his journey to the Prophet who had already given the
 order for his death

The Merciful (*al Rahmán*) i.e. God The word is Koranic and
 by using it Ka b signifies that he has become a Moslem

I was told that the Messenger of Allah threatened me (with death), but with the Messenger of Allah I have hope of finding pardon

Gently¹ mayst thou be guided by Him who gave thee the gift of the Koran, wherein are warnings and a plain setting-out (of the matter).

Do not punish me, when I have not sinned, on account of what is said by the informers, even should the (false) sayings about me be many

Ay, I stand in such a place that if an elephant stood there, seeing (what I see) and hearing what I hear,

The sides of his neck would be shaken with terror if there be no forgiveness from the Messenger of Allah

I did not cease to cross the desert, plunging betimes into the darkness when the mantle of Night is fallen,

Till I laid my right hand, not to withdraw it, in the hand of the avenger whose word is the word of truth

For indeed he is more feared by me when I speak to him and they told me I should be asked of my lineage

Than a lion of the jungle, one whose lair is amidst dense thickets in the lowland of 'Aththar,

He goes in the morning to feed two cubs, whose victual is human flesh rolled in the dust and torn to pieces,

When he springs on his adversary, 'tis against his law that he should leave the adversary ere he is broken,

From him the asses of the broad dale flee in affright, and men do not walk in his wadi,

Albeit ever in his wadi is a trusty fere, his armour and hard-worn raiment smeared with blood ready to be devoured

Truly the Messenger is a light whence illumination is sought a drawn Indian sword, one of the swords of Allah,

Amongst a band of Kuraish, whose spokesman said when they professed Islam in the valley of Mecca, "Depart ye¹!"

They departed, but no weaklings were they or shieldless in battle or without weapons and courage,

¹ This refers to those Kuraishites who accompanied the Prophet in his migration (*hijra*) to Medina and are known accordingly by the name of *al-muhajirîn*

They march like splendid camels and defend themselves with
 blows when the short black men take to flight¹
 Warriors with noses high and straight clad for the fray in
 mail coats of David's weaving
 Bright ample with pierced rings strung together like the
 rings of the *kaf'a*²
 They are not exultant if their spears overtake an enemy or
 apt to despair if they be themselves overtaken
 The spear thrust falls not but on their throats for them
 there is no shrinking from the ponds of death⁴

MAISÚN

MAISUN was born and bred in the desert. Afterwards she married
 Mu áwiya the future Caliph and accompanied him to Damascus.
 The last verse alludes scornfully to her husband who was then
 governor of Syria.

22

A tent with rustling breezes cool
 Delights me more than palace high
 And more the cloak of simple wool
 Than robes in which I learned to sigh

The crust I ate beside my tent
 Was more than this fine bread to me
 The wind's voice where the hill path went
 Was more than tambourine can be

And more than purr of friendly cat
 I love the watch dog's bark to hear
 And more than any lubbard fat
 I love a Bedouin cavalier!

Probably a hit at the people of Medina some of whom had urged
 Mohammed to show the poet no mercy.

¹ David is described in the Koran (xxi. 80) as a maker of coats of
 mail.

Name of a plant

I.e. places where draughts of death are drunk

JAMÍL

23

Oh, that youth's flower anew might lift its head
 And return to us, Buthaina, the time that fled!
 And oh, might we bide again as we used to be
 When thy folk dwelt nigh and grudged what thou gavest me!

Shall I ever meet Buthaina alone again,
 Each of us full of love as a cloud of rain?
 Fast in her net was I when a lad, and till
 This day my love is growing and waxing still.

I have spent my lifetime waiting for her to speak,
 And the bloom of youth is faded from off my cheek;
 But I will not suffer that she my suit deny,
 My love remains undying, tho' all things die.

THE BALLAD OF THE THREE WITCHES

AS'AD KÁMIL, the hero of the following poem, is one of the legendary kings who reigned in Yemen (Arabia Felix) during the pre-Islamic period. The reader will have no difficulty in believing that these verses were recited by a wandering minstrel to the hearers that gathered round him at nightfall. They are, of course, the work of a Moslem—probably a professional storyteller—and may be as old as the seventh century A D

24

Time brings to pass full many a wonder
 Whereof the lesson thou must ponder
 Whilst all to thee seems ordered fair,
 Lo, Fate hath wrought confusion there.
 Against a thing foredoomed to be
 Nor cunning nor caution helpeth thee
 Now a marvellous tale will I recite,
 Trust me to know and tell it aright!

Once on a time was a boy of Asd,
 Who became the king of the land at last,

Born in Hamdán a villager
 The name of the village was Khanur
 This lad in the pride of youth defied
 His friends and they with scorn replied
 None guessed his worth till he was grown
 Ready to spring

One morn alone
 On Hinwam hill he was sore afraid
 His people knew not where he strayed
 They had seen him only yesternight
 For his youth and wildness they held him light
 The wretches! Him they never missed
 Who had been their glory had they wist

O the fear that fell on his heart when he
 Saw beside him the witches three!
 The eldest came with many a brew—
 In some was blood blood dark their hue
 Give me the cup! he shouted bold
 Hold hold! cried she but he would not hold
 She gave him the cup nor he did shrink
 Tho' he reeled as he drained the magic drink

Then the second yelled at him Her he faced
 Like a lion with anger in his breast
 These be our steeds come mount ' she cried
 For asses are worst of steeds to ride
 Tis sooth he answered and slipped his flank
 O'er a hyena lean and lank
 But the brute so fiercely flung him away
 With deep deep wounds on the earth he lay
 Then came the youngest and tended him
 On a soft bed while her eyes did swim
 In tears but he averted his face
 And sought a rougher resting place
 Such paramour he deemed too base
 And humthought in anguish lying there
 That needles underneath him were

Now when they had marked his mien so bold,
 Victory in all things they foretold
 "The wars, O As'ad, waged by thee
 Shall heal mankind of misery
 Thy sword and spear the foe shall rue
 When his gashes let the daylight through;
 And blood shall flow on every hand
 What time thou marchest from land to land
 By us be counselled stay not within
 Khamir, but go to Zafár and win!
 To thee shall dalliance ne'er be dear,
 Thy foes shall see thee before they hear
 Desire moved to encounter thee,
 Noble prince, us witches three
 Not jest, but earnest on thee we tried,
 And well didst thou the proof abide "

As'ad went home and told his folk
 What he had seen, but no heed they took
 On the tenth day he set out again
 And fared to Zafár with thoughts in his brain
 There fortune raised him to high renown
 None swifter to strike ever wore a crown

* * * * *

Thus found we the tale in memory stored,
 And almighty is the Lord
 Praise be to God who liveth aye,
 The Glorious to whom all men pray!

SAFÍYA OF BÁHILA

DATE unknown In these verses she mourns the death of her brother.

25

Two boughs, the fairest ever tree possessed,
 We sprang and mounted from the selfsame root,
 Until men said, "Long are their shoots, and blest
 Their shade and sweet the promise of their fruit "

But Time whose villainy will nothing spare
 Destroyed my dear one He did us excel
 As mongst the stars a moon more bright and fair
 And as a moon from forth our midst he fell

FARAZDAK

FARAZDAK (died in A.D. 728) is best known as a satirist but from the following poem we see that he could praise with dignity and effect even when his feelings were not engaged. Hazzáj son of Yusuf the subject of this elegy governed Irák for the Calíphs Abdu l Malík and Walíd. Ruthless in putting down revolt he was execrated by all opposed to the Umayyad dominion. Farazdak though himself a keen partisan of the Alids does justice here to the great qualities of their arch enemy.

26

(Metre *Tawíl*)

Let all weep for al Hazzáj who weep for the Faith or one
 That sold unto God his life in guarding the Moslem land
 And him let the orphans weep whose mother with arms
 begrimed

From Fortune in wasting years of famine hath naught left o'er
 For ne'er since Mohammed died have eyes flowed for any man
 Like him or beheld his peer excepting the Calíphs selves
 Nor ever the like of him was laid for the earth to bear
 Nor written a name like his in letters announcing death
 So firm to beat back and rout the demon of Mutiny
 When War shows her grinning teeth—a she camel scabbed
 and old

Nay never I saw a day of heavier grief and woe
 And fuller of hands raised up to wipe the overflowing eyes
 Than that morn when al Hazzáj was carried upon his bier
 Who many a burden used to shoulder and win safe through
 When news of his death was brought the woman that oft
 let stray

Her flocks in the wilderness would fain keep them close in fold
 And cried to her slaves Fetch home the cattle and tether
 them

For he that was wont erstwhile to shepherd our flocks is dead

Ay, dead, he that shepherded the Faith for believing men
 And smote with his Indian blade the head of its adversary.
 And would they had been cut off, the hands that interred
 the son

Of Yúsuf, what time they cast the earth o'er the covering
 stones¹

But how could ye as ye gazed and he in his winding-sheet
 At last lay him down betwixt the sides of a hollow grave?
 For did not ye know 'twas he, whom there ye were burying,
 That ruled in his master's name the frontiers of empire far?
 He healed with his Mashrafite good sword the corrupted
 Faith,

And rancorous hates that breed dissensions he purged away.
 No money prevailed on him to alter the just decree.

His sentence a rope, whereof not loose were the strands or
 weak,

But woven from left to right, for fineness, and then made fast
 In knots twisted well and tied securely behind the neck
 The army that stood beyond the River, the tribes called up¹,
 On hearing the death of him, their captain, with one voice cried,
 "Unhappy are we alas, the Strength of our host is dead,
 Whereby every heart in hour of peril was braced again "

Yet surely, if al-Hajjáj is dead, Abu 'l-'Ás's race
 Of generous hawk-like chiefs are living and have not died,
 And never there failed Marwán a proud scion of his House,
 A man perfect as the moon at full and without eclipse,
 Who filled with his glory's light the region of al-'Irák,
 And no one his vengeance feared except for his own ill deed²

ABÚ NUWÁS

ABÚ NUWÁS, who drank and jested with the Caliph Hárún al-Rashíd, was a poet of extraordinary genius. In his wine-songs he portrays with an art almost Greek in its ease and directness

¹ "The River," i.e. the Oxus. The tribes called up are those which were enrolled after the decisive battle at Kádísíya in order to complete the conquest of Persia.

² In these verses the poet flatters the reigning Umayyad Caliph, Walíd son of 'Abdu 'l-Malik son of Marwán. Abu 'l-'Ás was Marwán's grandfather.

not only himself as he lived from day to day but the luxury and debauchery prevailing at the court of Baghdád where Persian manners had become fashionable. He often ridicules the conventions of Bedouin love poetry and the rude monotony of life in the desert.

Let the south wind moisten with rain the desolate scene
And Time efface what once was so fresh and green!
Make the camel rider free of a desert space
Where high bred camels trot with unwearied pace
Where only mimosas and thistles flourish and where
For hunting wolves and hyenas are nowise rare!

Although he treated moral laws and religious observances with contempt his *Diwán* includes some edifying poems on asceticism. Perhaps these were composed in moods of disgust and disillusion. One who was cynically frank in describing his own vices is unlikely to have assumed a virtue which he did not feel.

27

Four things banish grief and care
Four sweet things incline
Body and soul and eyne
To enjoy if they be there
Water wine
Gardens bright and faces fair

28

(Metre *Wafir*)

O Málik! I pray thee go for the wine full early
And if it be dear to buy then buy it dearly!
Bethink thee how once a grizzled old tavern keeper
Whose whiskers were black with blowing the tarry wineskin
I called as he lay where slumber had stolen o'er him—
His head sunk low the left hand's palm his pillow
And *he at my cry arose with a start of terror*
And hastened to light the wick and it flared and straightway
His terror was flown he had gotten a look of gladness
And gaily haha'd—a clatter of idle laughter
When now by the flame my features were lit he gave me
The greeting of love asked many a courteous question

And into his hand I counted a thousand dirhems
 To lodge me a month, with freedom for either party
 I found in his pleasure-domes two noble virgins
 Of family high and proud, and became their bridegroom
 'Tis thus I have ever lived and am living ever,
 Away my religion goes and my wealth in armfuls
 As oft as we meet, I like what the law forbiddeth,
 And never can bear to like what the law hath hallowed

29

Youth and I, we ran
 No recorded sin
 Of the gifts of Time
 Than when music wakes
 O the girl whose song
 Oft at Dhí Tulúh
 Make the most of Youth,
 Let the wine flow round
 Pour into thy cup
 That will melt to ruth
 Sought and chosen out
 Dower'd with twin delights
 Seest not thou that I
 Kissed the mouth of fair
 'Tis because I know,
 Far apart shall be

a headlong race of pleasure,
 but soon I took its measure
 there's none to heaven nigher
 the string of lute and lyre
 I had it for the asking
 rose where our tents were basking!
 it stayeth not for ever,
 from eve to morn one river!
 a sparking ruddy vintage
 the miser's hardest mintage,
 of old for Persia's ruler,
 of fragrancý and colour
 have pawned my soul for liquor,
 gazelle and foaming beaker?
 full well I know and fear it,
 my body and my spirit

30

Thou scolder of the grape and me,
 I ne'er shall win thy smile
 Because against thee I rebel
 'Tis churlish to revile

Ah, breathe no more the name of wine
 Until thou cease to blame,
 For fear that thy foul tongue should smirch
 Its fair and lovely name!

Come pour it out ye gentle boys
 A vintage ten years old
 That seems as though twere in the cup
 A lake of liquid gold

And when the water mingles there
 To fancy's eye are set
 Pearls over shining pearls close strung
 As in a carcanet

31

'Tis the dawn my brothers! Drink!
 The birds have sung their matin song
 Wake! The cup complains of us
 To the can for sleeping overlong

Pure wine when the toppers mix
 Joy is born until you see
 The staidest rocking in his place
 In an ecstasy of glee

32

Musallà is desolate I tread the Dunes no more desolate
 are Mirbadan and Labab
 And the mosque where chivalry and piety met and the
 spacious courts and enclosures
 Which I frequented a tall stripling until the grey patches
 showed on my cheek
 With some lively blades in their prime of youth and graced
 with culture
 Then Time made trouble and they were divided like the
 people of Saba and scattered in far lands¹
 Alas never will the world give me such comrades again so
 admirable were they!
 When I knew for sure that they were gone and would never
 return as long as I live

Like the people of Saba : e irretrievably The Sabaeans were the ancient inhabitants of Yemen According to the legend they were dispersed by a great flood which burst the Dyke of Ma'rib and laid waste the land See my *Literary History of the Arabs* p. 14 fol

I displayed a patience not displayed by any one before, and
 diverse pleasures shared me amongst themselves
 Thus it is when I am afflicted by the loss of a dear brother,
 there is no tie of kindred between me and him
 In the spring I dwell at Kutrabbul, and I pass the summer
 in the villages of Karkh¹, whilst my mother, the vine,
 Suckles me with her milk and shelters me with her shade in
 the flaming noon.
 When the boughs droop, I am covered with an unpierced
 roof of spreading shade
 The doves that haunt it keep mourning like bereaved women
 chanting a dirge,
 Their longing and mine breathe tremblingly together, as
 though we were stirred by one emotion
 I rose, crawling to suck as a child smitten with hunger,
 Till at last I chose for myself the daughter of a kiosk², on
 whom the years and generations had tried their teeth,
 And in the thick gloom of night I tore from her the fine-
 woven fringeless veil
 Wrought by a rude craftswoman³, for whom no tethering-
 cord or tent-rope is made fast and taut in the ground
 Then I bored her waist with the point of the awl⁴, and the
 wine gushed forth like flame
 Goblets of silver and gold collected it for the revellers and
 set it flowing round to us
 Goblet and wine so nearly resembled each other, I wondered
 which of them was the gold,
 Both are alike, yet with a difference that is solid and this
 molten
 Some smooth, some engraved with pictures of Christian
 priests and crosses,
 Priests reciting their Gospel above them a sky of wine whose
 star-bubbles
 Shine like pearls strewn by the reckless hands of maidens
 at play

¹ Kutrabbul and Karkh are places in the neighbourhood of Baghdád

² *I e* a wine-jar

³ The spider Cf Koran, xxix, 40 "The weakest of houses is surely the house of the spider"

⁴ *Ishfâ* (awl), *z e'* an iron instrument, elsewhere (xv, 10) called *bizdl*, used for opening the clay-sealed mouth of a wine-jar

33

Ho! a cup and fill it up and tell me it is wine
 For never will I drink in shade if I can drink in shine
 Curst and poor is every hour that sober I must go
 But rich am I whene'er well drunk I stagger to and fro
 Speak for shame the loved one's name let vain disguises fall
 Good for naught are pleasures hid behind a curtain wall

34

Come Sulaimán sing to me
 And the wine quick bring to me!
 Lo already Dawn is here
 In a golden mantle clear
 Whilst the flask goes twinkling round
 Pour me a cup that leaves me drowned
 With oblivion ne'er so nigh
 Let the shrill muezzin cry!

35

The lovelorn wretch stopped at a (deserted) camping ground
 to question it and I stopped to enquire after the local
 tavern

May Allah not dry the eyes of him that wept over stones and
 may He not ease the pain of him that yearns to a tent peg!¹
 They said Didst thou commemorate the dwelling places
 of the tribe of Asad? Plague on thee! tell me who are
 the Banu Asad?

And who are Tamím and Kais and their kinsfolk? In the
 sight of Allah the Bedouins are nobody

Leave this—may I lack thy company!—and drink old yellow
 wine coursing between the water and the froth

From the hand of a boy with the girdle on his slender waist²
 a straight well shaped lad and handsome as a willow bough

Here Abú Nuwás derides the fashionable poets who generally begin
 their odes with a lament over the relics of a deserted habitation Cf No 11

¹ By this time respect for the traditions and ideals of the pagan Arabs
 had largely passed away under the influence of Moslem piety and
 Persian culture

Jews Christians and Zoroastrians wore a girdle to distinguish them
 from the faithful The wine seller would of course be an infidel

When his father saw that I was lying in wait for him, he
 greeted me and made sure that I would squander my
 money,
 And brought me a vintage which he is in no hurry to fetch
 (for his customers) and will not sell without striking
 hands¹
 Be generous and give thy whole fortune for it do not hoard
 anything to-day for fear of being poor to-morrow
 What a distance between the purchaser of a delicious wine
 and him that weeps over a ditch and dyke²!
 O railer, there hath come to me a hasty word from thee if
 my forgiveness cover it up, do not offend again!
 Were thy blame sincere, I would accept it, but thy blame is
 chargeable to envy.

ABU 'L-'ATÁHIYA

If Abu 'l-'Atáhiya was inferior to Abú Nuwás as a poet, he took
 a view of life which appeals to the typical Moslem far more than
 that of his contemporary. Because his religious asceticism is
 tinged with moral philosophy, he was accused of being a free-
 thinker, but the spirit of his poetry is orthodox. He does not,
 like Abu 'l-'Alá al-Ma'arrí, suggest doubts and insinuate disbelief
 in the faith which he professes.

36

Get sons for death, build houses for decay!
 All, all, ye wend annihilation's way
 For whom build we, who must ourselves return
 Into our native element of clay?
 O Death, nor violence nor flattery thou
 Dost use, but when thou com'st, escape none may
 Methinks, thou art ready to surprise mine age,
 As age surprised and made my youth his prey
 What ails me, World, that every place perforce
 I lodge thee in, it galleth me to stay?

¹ *I.e.* without making a formal bargain

² Bedouins dig round their tents a trench which, together with the
 banked-up earth, serves them as an aqueduct and also as a dyke

And O Time how do I behold thee run
 To spoil me? Thine own gift thou tak'st away!
 O Time! inconstant mutable art thou
 And o'er the realm of ruin is thy sway
 What ails me that no glad result it brings
 Whene'er O World to milk thee I essay?
 And when I court thee why dost thou raise up
 On all sides only trouble and dismay?
 Men seek thee every wise but thou art like
 A dream the shadow of a cloud the day
 Which hath but now departed nevermore
 To dawn again a glittering vapour gay
 This people thou hast paid in full their feet
 Are on the stirrup—let them not delay!
 But those that do good works and labour well
 Hereafter shall receive the promised pay
 As if no punishment I had to fear
 A load of sin upon my neck I lay
 And whilst the world I love from Truth alas
 Still my besotted senses go astray
 I shall be asked of all my business here
 What can I plead then? What can I gainsay?
 What argument allege when I am called
 To render my account on Reckoning Day?
 Dooms twain in that dread hour shall be revealed
 When I the scroll of these mine acts survey
 Either to dwell in everlasting bliss
 Or suffer torments of the damned for aye

37

Surely shall Fate disjoint the proudest nose
 All wears away by movement and repose
 In long experience if wisdom be
 Less than my portion is enough for me
 Eager I take the hopes my soul inspires
 False are these hopes and vain are these desires
 That my hereafter I neglect is clear
 Since I am pleased and happy with things here

O thou that gloriest in thy worldly state,
 Mud piled on mud will never make thee great
 Nay, wouldst thou see the noblest man of all,
 Look at a monarch in a beggar's pall¹
 To him great honour by the folk is given,
 'Tis he knows how to live on earth for Heaven

FÁRI'A DAUGHTER OF TARÍF

A dirge for her brother, Walid the Khárijite, who was slain in battle by Yazid son of Mazyad in the reign of Hárún al-Rashid

(Metre. *Tawíl*)

38

At Tallu Nuhákà stands the cairn of a grave set high
 As though on a mountain-peak o'ertopping the mountains,
 A grave that doth hold renown most ancient and chieftainhood
 And courage heroical and judgment unshaken
 But why bud ye, O ye trees of Khábúr, with leaves afresh?
 Methinks, ye have never mourned Taríf's son, my brother
 He liked not of food but that he gained in the fear of God,
 Of wealth only what was won by good swords and lances,
 Nor aught would he prize ^{and} keep but many a hardy mare
 Sleek-coated, well-used to charge thro' ranks of the battle.
 And now 'tis as though with us thou ne'er hadst been present
 here,

Or ta'en 'gainst our foes a stand not soon to be yielded,
 Or ever done on, for sake of plunging in loathly fray,
 A hauberk of mail amongst dark-glittering horsemen,
 Or striven on a field of War, when big is her womb with woe
 And keen tawny-shafted pikes have pricked her to fury
 The comrade of Bounty he, his life long him Bounty loved,
 And since he is dead, no more loves Bounty a comrade
 We lost thee as Youth, once lost, returns not, and fain had we
 Redeemed thee with thousands of the lives of our bravest

¹ Mohammedan ascetics and holy men are frequently described as spiritual kings (see my *Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 298, note 1). The metaphor, no doubt, is derived from the story of Buddha, but I do not agree with Prof. Goldziher, who thinks that in this passage the poet refers to Buddha himself.

For aye I was Walid till Death drew right forth the soul of him
 A grief to the foeman or a home to the friendless
 Come weep O my kin the doom of death and the woeful
 change

And earth trembling after him and quaking beneath us!
 Come weep O my kin the turns of fortune the perishings,
 And pitiless Fate that dogs the noble with ruin!
 Alas for the perfect moon fall n low from amongst the stars
 Alas for the sun when toward eclipse was his journey!
 Alas for the lion yea the lion without reproach
 What time to a hollowed grave roofed over they bore him!
 Oh God curse the mounded stones that covered him out of
 sight

A man that was never tired of doing a kindness!
 If he by Yazid the son of Mazyad was done to death
 Yet many a host he led of warriors to combat
 Upon him the peace of God abide evermore! Meseems
 That fast fall the strokes of Death on all who are noble

IBN HISHÁM

THE first biography of the Prophet was written by Ibn Ishak who died at Baghdád in A.D. 768. The original work has been lost but is known to us at second hand in the recension of Ibn Hishám (died in A.D. 834)

39

Concerning the true visions with which the prophethood of Mohammed began

Ibn Ishak said Zuhri relates on the authority of Urwa son of Zubair that Áisha told him (Urwa) that when Allah desired to honour Mohammed and have mercy on His servants by means of him the first sign of prophethood vouchsafed to the Messenger of Allah—may Allah bless him and give him peace!—was true visions resembling the brightness of daybreak which were shown to him in his sleep. And Allah she said caused him to wish for solitude, so that he liked nothing better than to be alone

How the stones and trees greeted the Prophet

Ibn Ishák said 'Abdu 'l-Malik son of 'Abdullah, son of Abú Sufyán son of 'Alá son of Járiya the 'Thakífite, who had a retentive memory, related to me on the authority of a certain scholar, that the Messenger of Allah, at the time when Allah willed to bestow His grace upon him and endow him with prophethood, would go forth for his affair and journey far afield until he reached the ravines of Mecca and the beds of its valleys where no house was in sight; and not a stone or tree that he passed by but would say, "Peace unto thee, O Messenger of Allah!" And the Messenger of Allah would turn round to his right and left and look behind him, and he would see naught except trees and stones. Thus he stayed, seeing and hearing, so long as it pleased Allah that he should stay. Then Gabriel came to him with the gift of Allah's grace, whilst he was on Mt Hirá in the month of Ramadán.

How Gabriel, on whom be peace, came down

Ibn Ishák said Wahb son of Kaisán, a client of the family of Zubair, related to me and said, "I heard 'Abdullah son of Zubair say to 'Ubaid son of 'Umar son of Katáda the Laithite, 'O 'Ubaid, tell us how was the beginning of the prophethood which was first bestowed on the Messenger of Allah when Gabriel came to him.' And 'Ubaid, in my presence, related to 'Abdullah son of Zubair and those with him as follows"

The Messenger of Allah would sojourn on Mt Hirá every year for a month, to practise *tahannuth*, as was the custom of Kuraish during the Heathendom [*Tahannuth* is religious devotion. Ibn Ishák said. Abú Tálib said (in verse).

"By Thaur and Him who made Thabír firm in its place, and by those going up to ascend Hirá and coming down¹"

Ibn Hishám said The Arabs say *tahannuth* and *tahannuf*, meaning the Hanífite religion², and substitute *f* for *th*, just

¹ Thaur and Thabír are mountains near Mecca

² *I.e.* the monotheistic religion adopted by a few Arabs in the time immediately preceding Islam. See my *Literary History of the Arabs*, p. 149 fol

as they say *jadath* and *jadaḥ* meaning a grave Ru ba son of Ajjáj said

If my stones were with the other gravestones (*al-ajddf*)¹ meaning *al ajdath* This verse belongs to a *rajaz* poem by him and the verse of Abu Tálib to a *kaṣída* (ode) by him which I will mention please God in the proper place Ibn Hishám said And Abu Ubaida related to me that the Arabs say *fumma* instead of *thumma*]

Ibn Ishák said Wahb son of Kaisán told me that Ubaid said to him Every year during that month the Messenger of Allah would sojourn (on Mt Hirá) and give food to the poor that came to him And when he passed the month and returned from his sojourn first of all before entering his house he would repair to the Ka ba and walk round it seven times or as often as it pleased Allah then he would go back to his house Now in the year when Allah sent him in the month of Ramadan in which Allah willed concerning him what He willed of His grace the Messenger of Allah set forth to Hirá as was his wont and his family with him And when it was the night on which Allah honoured him with his mission and took mercy on His servants thereby Gabriel brought to him the command of Allah He came to me said the Messenger of Allah whilst I was asleep with a coverlet of silk brocade whereon was some writing and said Read! I said I do not read He pressed me with it so tightly that methought twas death then he let me go and said Read! I said I do not read He pressed me with it again so that methought twas death then he let me go and said Read! I said I do not read He pressed me with it the third time so that methought twas death and said Read! I said What shall I read? —and thus I said only to deliver myself from him lest he should do unto me the like once more He said

Read in the name of thy Lord who created
Who created Man of blood coagulated
Read! Thy Lord is the most beneficent
Who taught by the Pen
Taught that which they knew not unto men

¹ *i.e.* If I were dead and buried

* Koran Sura xcvi verses 1-5

So I read aloud, and he departed from me at last. And I awoke from my sleep, and it was as though these words were written on my heart. I went forth until, when I was midway on the mountain, I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'O Mohammed! thou art the Messenger of Allah and I am Gabriel' I raised my head towards heaven to see (who was speaking), and lo, Gabriel in the form of a man with feet set evenly on the rim of the sky, saying, 'O Mohammed! thou art the Messenger of Allah and I am Gabriel' I stood gazing at him, moving neither forward nor backward; then I began to turn my face away from him, but towards whatever region of the sky I looked, I saw him as before. And I ceased not from standing still, neither advancing nor turning back, until Khadíja sent her messengers in search of me and they gained the high ground above Mecca and returned to her whilst I was standing in the same place, then he parted from me and I from him, returning to my family. And I came to Khadíja and sat by her thigh and drew close to her. She said, 'O Abu 'l-Kásim¹, where hast thou been?' By God, I sent my messengers in search of thee, and they reached the high ground above Mecca and returned hither.' Then I told her of what I had seen, and she said, 'Rejoice, O son of my uncle, and be of good heart. Verily, by Him in whose hand is Khadíja's soul, I have hope that thou wilt be the prophet of this people.' Then she rose and gathered her garments about her and set forth to her cousin Waraka son of Naufal son of Asad son of 'Abdu 'l-'Uzzà son of Kusai, who had become a Christian and read the Scriptures and learned from those that follow the Torah and the Gospel. And when she related to him what the Messenger of Allah told her he had seen and heard, Waraka cried, "Holy! Holy! Verily by Him in whose hand is Waraka's soul, if thou hast spoken to me the truth, O Khadíja, there hath come unto him the greatest Námús² who came to Moses aforetime, and lo, he is the prophet of this people. Bid him be of good heart." So Khadíja returned to the Messenger of Allah and told him what Waraka had said. And when the Messenger

¹ The *kunya* or "name of honour" of Mohammed

² *I e* Gabriel. In this phrase the word *namús* (νόμος) signifies "Confidant."

of Allah had finished his sojourn and returned (to Mecca) in the first place he performed the *tawaf* (circumambulation) of the Ka'ba as was his wont. Whilst he was doing it Waraka met him and said 'O son of my brother tell me what thou hast seen and heard.' The Messenger of Allah told him and Waraka said 'Surely by Him in whose hand is Waraka's soul thou art the prophet of this people. There hath come unto thee the greatest Namus who came unto Moses. Thou wilt be called a liar and they will use thee spitefully and cast thee out and fight against thee. Verily if I live to see that day I will help Allah in such wise as He knoweth.' Then he brought his head near to him and kissed his *sinciput* and the Messenger of Allah went to his own house.

40

The Battle of Badr

Ibn Ishāk said 'The men of Kuraish having marched forth at daybreak now came on. When the Messenger of Allah saw them descending from the hill Akankal into the valley he cried 'O Allah here come Kuraish in their vanity and pride contending with Thee and calling Thy messenger a liar. O Allah grant the help which Thou didst promise me. Destroy them this morning!' Before uttering these words he had espied amongst the enemy Utba son of Rabi'a mounted on a red camel and said 'If there be aught good in any one of them it will be with the man on the red camel if they hearken unto him they will take the right way.' Khufaf son of Aima son of Rahada or his father Aima son of Rahada the Ghufārite had sent to Kuraish as they passed by a son of his with some camels for slaughter which he gave them as a gift saying 'If ye desire that we aid you with arms and men we will do so but they sent to him the following message by the mouth of his son— 'Thou hast done all that a kinsman ought. If we are fighting only men we are surely strong enough for them and if we are fighting Allah as Mohammed declares none is able to withstand Allah. And when Kuraish encamped some of them

amongst whom was Hakím son of Hizám, went to the tank of the Messenger of Allah to drink. "Let them be!" he said, and every man that drank of it on that day was killed, excepting Hakím son of Hizám, who afterwards became a good Moslem and used to say, when he was earnest in his oath, "Nay, by Him who saved me on the day of Badr"

*How Kuraish took counsel whether they should return
without fighting*

Ibn Ishák said My father, Ishák son of Yasár, and other learned men have related on the authority of some elders of the Ansár that when the enemy had settled in their camp, they sent 'Umar son of Wahb the Jumahite to ascertain the number of those with Mohammed. He rode on horseback round the Moslem camp and on his return said, "Three hundred men, a little more or less, but wait till I see whether they have any in ambush or support" He made his way far into the valley but saw nothing. On his return he said, "I have seen nothing, but O people of Kuraish, I have seen calamities fraught with dooms the camels of Yathrib (Medina) laden with slaughter and death. These men have no defence or refuge but their swords. By Allah! I deem not that a man of them will be slain till he slay one of you, and if they kill of you a number equal to their own, what is the good of living after that? Consider, then, what ye will do." When Hakím son of Hizám heard those words, he went on foot amongst the folk until he came to 'Utba son of Rabí'a and said, "O Abu 'l-Walíd, thou art chief and lord of Kuraish and he whom they obey. Dost thou wish to be remembered with praise amongst them to the end of time?" Said 'Utba, "How may that be, O Hakím?" He answered, "Lead them back (to Mecca) and take up the cause of thy confederate, 'Amr son of the Hadramite." "I will do it," cried 'Utba, "and thou art witness against me (if I break my word) he was under my protection, it behoves me to pay his bloodwit and what was seized of his wealth (to his kinsmen). Now go thou to the son of Hanzaliya" meaning Abú Jahl "for I do not fear that any one will make trouble

except him [Ibn Hisham said Hanzaliya was the mother of Abu Jahl her name was Asmá and she was the daughter of Mukharriba one of the Banu Nahshal son of Darim son of Málík son of Hanzala son of Malík son of Zaid Manat son of Tamim] Then Utba rose to speak and said O people of Kuraish! By Allah ye will gain naught by giving battle to Mohammed and his companions By Allah if ye fall upon him ye will evermore look each one of you with loathing on the face of another who has slain the son of his paternal or maternal uncle or some man of his kith and kin Therefore turn back and leave Mohammed to the rest of the Arabs If they smite him that is what ye desire and if it be other wise he will find that ye have not sought to do unto him as ye desire¹

Hakim said I went to Abu Jahl and found him making ready a coat of mail which he had taken out of its bag I said to him O Abu I Hakam Utba hath sent me to thee with such and such a message and I told him what Utba had said By Allah he cried his lungs became swollen (with fear) when he saw Mohammed and his companions No by Allah we will not turn back until Allah decide between us and Mohammed Utba does not believe his own words but he has seen that Mohammed and his companions are (in number as) the eaters of one slaughtered camel and his son is amongst them so he was afraid lest ye slay him Then he sent to Ámir son of the Hadramute saying Thy confederate (Utba) is for turning back with the folk at this time when thou seest thy blood revenge before thine eyes Arise therefore and recall thy covenant and the murder of thy brother And Ámir son of the Hadramute arose and uncovered then he cried Alas for Amr! Alas for Amr! And war was kindled and all was marred and the folk held stubbornly on their evil course and the advice of Utba was wasted on them When Utba heard how Abu Jahl had taunted him he said He with the dyed breech will find out whose lungs are swollen mine or his [Ibn Hishám

¹ *I.e.* If Mohammed be victorious over the Arabs he will have no reason for taking vengeance on you who have not sought to destroy him

said *Sahn* is the lungs together with the parts above the navel adjoining the windpipe, what is below the navel is named *kusb*, as in the Prophet's saying, which was related to me by Abú 'Ubaida, "I saw 'Amr son of Luhai dragging his guts (*kusb*) in Hell-fire"] Then 'Utba looked for a helmet to put on his head, but seeing his head was so big that he could not find in the army a helmet that would contain it, he wound his head with a piece of cloth belonging to him "

How Aswad the Makhzúmite was slain

Ibn Ishák said Aswad son of 'Abdu 'l-Asad the Makhzúmite who was a quarrelsome ill-natured man, stepped forth and said, "I swear to Allah that I will drink from their cistern or destroy it or die before reaching it" Hamza son of 'Abdu 'l-Muttalib came forth against him, and when the twain met, Hamza smote him and severed his foot and half of his shank ere he reached the cistern. He fell on his back and lay there, blood streaming from his foot towards his comrades. Then he crawled to the cistern and threw himself into it with the purpose of fulfilling his oath, but Hamza followed him and smote him and killed him in the cistern.

How 'Utba challenged the Moslems to single combat

Then after him 'Utba son of Rabí'a stepped forth between his brother Shaiba son of Rabí'a and his son Walíd son of 'Utba, and when he stood clear of the ranks gave the challenge for single combat. Three men of the Ansár¹ came out against him 'Auf and Mu'awwidh the sons of Hárith (their mother was 'Afrá) and another man, said to have been 'Abdullah son of Rawáha. The Kuraishites said, "Who are ye?" They answered, "Some of the Ansár," whereupon the three of Kuraish said, "We have naught to do with you." Then the herald of Kuraish shouted, "O Mohammed! Send forth against us our peers of our own tribe!" The Messenger of Allah said, "Arise, O 'Ubaida son of Hárith, and arise, O Hamza, and arise, O 'Alí." And when they arose and approached them, the Kuraishites said, "Who are ye?" And having heard each declare his name, they said, "Ay, these

¹ The men of Medina

are noble and our peers Now Ubaida was the eldest of them and he faced Utba son of Rabi'a while Hamza faced Shaiba son of Rabi'a and Ali faced Walid son of Utba It was not long ere Hamza slew Shaiba and Ali slew Walid Ubaida and Utba exchanged two blows with one another and each laid his enemy low Then Hamza and Ali rushed on Utba with their swords and despatched him and bore away their comrade and brought him back to his friends Ibn Ishák said Ásim son of Umar son of Katáda related to me that when the men of the Ansár declared their lineage Utba said Ye are noble and our peers but we desire men of our own tribe

How the two armies met

Ibn Ishák said Then they advanced and drew near to one another The Messenger of Allah had ordered his companions not to attack until he gave the word and if the enemy should encompass them they were to keep them off with showers of arrows He himself remained in the hut with Abu Bakr the Siddík¹ The battle of Badr was fought on Friday morning the 17th of the month of Ramadán Ibn Ishák said So I was informed by Abu Ja'far Muhammad son of Ali son of Husain And Ibn Ishák said Habban son of Wási son of Habbán related to me on the authority of some elders of his tribe that on the day of Badr the Messenger of Allah straightened the ranks of his companions with an arrow which he held in his hand As he passed by Sawad son of Ghaziya a confederate of the sons of Adí son of Najjár—Ibn Hishám said according to others his name is Sawwád son of Ghaziya—who was standing in front of the rest he pricked him in his belly with the arrow saying Stand in line O Sawad! Thou hast hurt me O Messenger of Allah he cried and Allah hath sent thee with right and justice so let me retaliate The Messenger of Allah uncovered his belly and said Take thy retaliation Sawad embraced him and kissed his belly He asked What made thee do this O Sawád? O Messenger of Allah

¹ Abu Bakr who afterwards became Caliph is known by the name al Siddík the Veracious

said he, "thou seest what is before us, and as this is my last time with thee I wished that my skin should touch thine" The Messenger of Allah prayed for him and said it to him

How the Messenger of Allah besought his Lord for help

Ibn Ishák said Then the Messenger of Allah straightened the ranks and returned to the hut and entered it, and none was with him there but Abú Bakr And the Messenger of Allah was beseeching his Lord for the help which He had promised to him, and amongst his words were these "O Allah! if this band perish to-day, Thou wilt be worshipped no more" But Abú Bakr said, "O Prophet of Allah, do not further beseech thy Lord, for surely Allah will fulfil His promise to thee" And whilst the Messenger of Allah was in the hut, he slept a light sleep, then he awoke and said, "O Abú Bakr, be of good cheer! The help of Allah is come to thee Here is Gabriel holding the rein of a horse and leading it The dust is upon his front-teeth" Ibn Ishák said The first Moslem that fell was Mihja' a freedman of 'Umar son of Khattáb, he was shot by an arrow Then, whilst Háritha son of Suráka, one of the sons of 'Adí son of Nadjár, was drinking from the cistern, an arrow pierced his throat and killed him

How he incited them to battle

Ibn Ishák said Then the Messenger of Allah went forth to the folk and incited them and said, "By Him in whose hand is the soul of Mohammed, no man will be slain this day, fighting against them with steadfast courage, advancing, not retreating, except Allah will cause him to enter Paradise" And 'Umar son of Humám, one of the sons of Salima, was eating some dates which he had in his hand "*Bakh! bakh!*" said he, "is there nothing between me and Paradise save to be killed by these men?" He flung the dates from his hand, seized his sword, and fought against them till he was slain

Ibn Ishák said 'Ásim son of 'Umar son of Katáda related to me that 'Auf son of Hárith his mother was 'Afrá said, "O Messenger of Allah, what makes the Lord laugh (with joy) at His servant?" He answered, "When he plunges into

the midst of the enemy without a hauberk Auf drew off the mail coat that was on him and cast it away then he seized his sword and fought the foemen till he was slain

Ibn Ishák said And it was related to me by Muhammad son of Muslim son of Shihab the Zuhrite on the authority of Abdullah son of Thabala son of Suair the Udhrite a confederate of the Banu Zuhra that when the warriors advanced to battle Abu Jahl cried O Allah bring woe this morning on him that more than any of us hath cut the ties of kinship and wrought that which is not approved! 'Twas he began it all

*How the Messenger of Allah threw pebbles at the unbelievers
and put them to flight*

Ibn Ishák said Then the Messenger of Allah took a handful of small pebbles and said turning towards Kuraish

Foul are those faces! Then he threw the pebbles at them and ordered his companions to charge The foe was routed Allah slew many of their chiefs and made captive many of their nobles Meanwhile the Messenger of Allah was in the hut and Sa'd son of Mu'adh stood at the door of the hut girt with his sword With him were some of the Ansár guarding the Messenger of Allah in fear lest the enemy should make an onset against him And whilst the folk were laying hands on the prisoners the Messenger of Allah as I have been told saw displeasure in the face of Sa'd at what they were doing He said to him O Sa'd! by Allah me thinks thou mislikest what the folk are doing Yes by Allah he replied O Messenger of Allah 'Tis the first defeat that Allah hath let fall upon the infidels and I would liefer see them slaughtered than left alive

JÁHIZ

AMR son of Bahr generally known as Jáhiz (the goggle eyed) a native of Basra died in A.D. 869 His accomplishments were many and various Besides giving his name to a sect of rationalistic theologians he compiled a large number of volumes abounding in anecdotes and curious information of all sorts The extracts

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41 and 42 are from the *Kitābu 'l-Bayān*, a work on rhetoric; the others occur in his *Kitābu 'l-Hayawān* or "Book of Animals."

41

Abū 'Uthmān said¹ We have related a portion of the sayings and speeches of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace!) and have quoted some speeches of the early Moslems in full. Now we shall mention some detached sayings and repartees of men famed for eloquence and some exhortations spoken by the ascetics, and we shall direct our attention to those which are brief, not to those which are long, in order that the reader may be diverted rather than fatigued and wearied.

'Utba son of Abū Sufyān said to 'Abdu 'l-Samad, the tutor of his sons, "Let thy first step towards the improvement of my sons be the improvement of thyself, for their eyes will be fixed on thee: they will deem that good which thou dost commend, and that evil which thou dost condemn. Teach them the Book of God, but do not force them to it lest they find it tedious, or let them neglect it, lest they leave it entirely. Then make them recite the chastest poetry and the noblest Traditions of the Prophet, and see that until they have mastered one branch of knowledge they proceed not to another, for cramming the ear with words is a cause of misunderstanding. Threaten them with my anger, but do not call upon me to correct them. Be unto them as the physician who does not hasten to apply the remedy before knowing the disease. Bid them shun conversation with women and learn the stories of the sages by heart. The better care thou bestowest on them, the more thou mayst ask and the more I will give. Do not trust that I will excuse thee, for I have put my trust in thy competence. Be unsparing in correction of them and, please God, I will not be sparing in my benefits to thee."

Hajjāj² used to dislike Ziyād son of 'Amr, of the tribe 'Atik, but when the deputation (from 'Irāk) came to the Caliph 'Abdu 'l-Malik and praised Hajjāj, who was present,

¹ Abū 'Uthmān is the author's *kunya* (name of honour)

² The famous governor of 'Irak (died in A.D. 714)

Ziyád said O Prince of the Faithful Hajjáj is thy sword which never becomes blunt and thy arrow which never misses the mark and thy servant whom no detractor can accuse of failing in his duty towards thee After that Hajjáj liked no man better than Ziyád

Ghailán son of Kharasha said to Ahnaf What will preserve the Arabs from decline? He replied All will go well if they keep their swords on their shoulders and their turbans on their heads and ride on horseback and do not fall a prey to the fools sense of honour? And what is the fools sense of honour? That they regard forgiving one another as a wrong

Umar said Turbans are the crowns of the Arabs

An Arab of the desert was asked why he did not lay aside his turban Surely said he a thing which contains the hearing and the sight ought to be prized

Alí said—God be well pleased with him!— The elegance of a man is in his bonnet and the elegance of a woman in her boots And Ahnaf said Let your shoes be fine for shoes are to men what anklets are to women

Abdullah son of Ja far said to his daughter O little daughter beware of jealousy for it is the key of divorce and beware of chiding for it breeds hate Always adorn and perfume thyself and know that the most becoming adornment is antimony and the sweetest perfume is water

Abdullah son of Ja far bestowed largesse of every kind on Nasaib Abu l Hajná who had made an ode in praise of him Why they asked do you treat a fellow like this so handsomely—a negro and a slave? By God he answered

if his skin is black yet his praise is white and his poem truly Arabian He deserves for it a greater reward than he has gotten Ali he received was only some lean saddle camels and clothes which wear out and money which is soon spent whereas he gave an ode fresh and brilliant and praise that will never die

Mu áwiyá held an assembly at Kufa to receive the oath of allegiance as Caliph Those who swore loyalty to him were required to abjure allegiance to (the House of) Alí son of Abu Tálib—may God honour him! A man of the Banu

Tamīm came to Mu'āwiya, who demanded that he should repudiate 'Alī "O Prince of the Faithful," he replied, "we will obey those of you that are living, but we will not renounce those of you that are dead" Mu'āwiya turned to Mughīra and said, "Now, this is a man! Look after him well!"

42

In the name of God the merciful and compassionate We shall begin, in the name and by the help of God, with some sayings of the devotees concerning asceticism and with some mention of their characteristics and their exhortations

'Auf said on the authority of Hasan "The feet of a son of Adam will not stir (from the place of Judgment) until he be asked of three things his youth, how he wore it away, his life, how he passed it, and his wealth, whence he got it and on what he spent it"

Yūnus son of 'Ubaid said "I heard three sayings more wonderful than any I have ever heard The first is the saying of Hassān son of Abū Sinān 'Nothing is easier than abstinence from things unlawful if aught make thee doubt, leave it alone' The second is the saying of Ibn Sīrīn 'I have never envied any one any thing' The third is the saying of Muwarrik al-'Ijlī 'Forty years ago I asked of God a boon which He has not granted, and I have not despaired of obtaining it' They said to Muwarrik, 'What is it?' He replied, 'Not to meddle with that which does not concern me'"

Ziyād, the slave of 'Aiyāsh son of Abū Rabī'a, said, "I am more afraid of being hindered from prayer than of being denied an answer to my prayer"

Some people said to Rābī'a of (the tribe) Kais "We might speak to the men of thy family and they would purchase for thee a maid-servant who would relieve thee of the care of thy house" "By God," said she, "I am ashamed to beg aught of this world from Him who is the lord of it all how, then, should I beg it from one who is not the lord of it?"

A certain ascetic said "Your dwellings are before you¹, and your life is after your death"

¹ *I e* in the world to come

And Samuel son of Ādiyā the Jew said in verse

Being dead I was created and before that I was not anything
that dies but I died when I came to life

Hasan son of Dinār said Hasan (of Basra) saw a man in his death struggle Surely he exclaimed a thing of which this is the end ought not to be desired at the first and ought to be feared at the last

Mujālid son of Sa'īd gives the authority of Shābi for the following words spoken by Murra of Hamdan Mujālid relates that he had himself seen Murra and that according to Ismā'īl son of Abu Khalid who told Mujālid that he had never seen the like of him Murra used to perform prayers of five hundred bowings in a day and a night Murra would often say When (the Caliph) Uthmān—may God be well pleased with him¹—was killed I thanked God that I had no part in his murder and I performed a prayer of a hundred bowings Again after the battles of the Camel and Siffin I thanked God that I had taken no part in those wars and I added two hundred bowings Then after the battle of Nahrawān¹ at which I was not present I thanked God and added a hundred bowings and when the rebellion of Ibn Zubair took place I thanked God for the same reason and added a hundred more Now I ask God to forgive Murra notwithstanding that we perceive no justification for some of his words for you will not find amongst orthodox Moslems a single jurist who denies that it is lawful to fight the Kharijites even as we do not find any of them denying that it is lawful to fight robbers

Umar son of Abdu l Aziz was questioned concerning those who murdered Uthmān and those who deserted him and those who defended him He answered God with held my hand from that bloodshed and I prefer not to dip my tongue in it

Abu l Darda came to visit a sick man and said How do you find yourself? I am in fear of death From whom have you obtained all good? From God Why

¹ In the battle of Nahrawān (A.D. 658) the Kharijites were defeated by the Caliph Ali

² The eighth Umayyad Caliph (A.D. 717-20)

then, are you afraid of Him from whom alone you have obtained all good?" And when Abraham was cast into the fire, Gabriel (on whom be peace!) said to him, "Dost thou want anything, O Friend of Allah?" "From thee, nothing," he replied

It has been related to me that 'Umar son of Khattáb¹ (may God be well pleased with him!) said "O people, there came over me a time when I was thinking that those who recite the Koran sought thereby only Allah and what is His to give But now meseems that some of you recite the Koran, seeking thereby what is with men Oh, seek Allah by your recitation and seek Him by your works! Well did we know you when the Revelation was coming down and when the Prophet God bless him and grant him peace! was in the midst of us, but the Revelation hath ceased and the Prophet is gone, and now I know you only by that which I say unto you. Look you, whosoever sheweth to us good, we will think good of him and praise him for it, and whosoever sheweth to us ill, we will think ill of him and hate him for it Restrain ye these souls from their lusts, for they are eager in desire, and if ye restrain them not, they will speed you to the most evil end Verily this Truth is weighty and wholesome, and verily falsehood is light and unhealthy To abandon sin is better than to strive after repentance Many a time hath one glance sown the seed of a lust, and the lust of a moment hath left a long grief behind"

Abú Házim the Lame said "I have found worldly wealth to be two things One of these is due to me, but I shall never receive it in advance of its appointed term, not though I should demand it with all the might of the heavens and the earth The other is not due to me I have not obtained it in the past nor shall I obtain it in the future What is due to me is withheld from others, just as what is due to others is withheld from me For which of these twain's sake, then, shall I waste my life and bring my soul to perdition?"

Said Jesus son of Mary the blessings of God be on our Prophet and on him! "Verily the friends of God have no fear nor do they grieve They are those who looked to the

¹ The second Caliph

reality of this life when others looked to its appearance and to the state hereafter that abideth when others looked to the life that fleeteth away They made to die thereof that which they feared would make their spirits die and they abandoned thereof that which they knew would abandon them

And seeing him go forth from the house of a harlot they said O Spirit of God what doest thou here? Jesus answered The physician comes only to the sick

And he passed by some people and they reviled him Then he passed by others and they reviled him And the more they spake evil the more he spake good A man of the disciples said to him The more they do thee evil the more thou doest them good it is as though thou wert setting them on against thee and inciting them to revile thee Jesus said Every man gives of that which he hath

43

What follows was related to me by Abu Shu'ayb al Kallāl (the Potter) one of the Sufrites¹ He said The ascetics amongst the *zindiks* are wanderers They have substituted a wandering life for the practice of the Nestorians and Melchites who never quit their cells while the Nestorians often dwell in chambers dug in the ground They always travel in pairs if you see one of them you will not look far before espying his companion Wandering (*siyahat*) as they regard it consists in not passing two nights in the same place While travelling they observe four rules holiness purity veracity and poverty Poverty means that they eat only such food as is obtained by begging and is willingly bestowed on them thus any guilt or sin connected with it falls on the giver who has earned it for himself

Purity is abstention from sexual intercourse veracity to refrain from lying holiness to conceal any fault even if they are questioned about it Two of those men entered Ahwaz One went towards the graveyard to satisfy a want

¹ A sect of the Khārjites

² This name which is commonly given by Moslems to the Manichaeans seems to be applied here to the Buddhists

of nature, and the other sat down near a goldsmith's shop. Meanwhile a woman came forth from one of the palaces with a small box containing precious stones. As she left the road to go up to the shop, she slipped and the box fell from her hand. There was an ostrich roaming to and fro, which belonged to the people of one of the houses in that neighbourhood. When the box fell, its lid came off and the contents were scattered, and the ostrich swallowed the largest and most valuable stone. All this was seen by the wanderer. The goldsmith and his lads sprang forward, collected the stones, and kept back the people with shouts, so that none of them approached the spot. On missing the jewel, the woman screamed. Those present made a thorough search and put their heads together, but the stone was not to be found. "By God," said one of them, "nobody was near us except this ascetic who is sitting here: he must have got it." So they questioned him. Now, he did not wish to inform them that it was in the ostrich's belly, for the ostrich would be slaughtered and he would then have had a share in shedding the blood of an animal. He said, therefore, "I have not taken anything." They searched him and carefully examined every article of his property and plied him hard with blows, until his companion came up and besought them to fear God. Then they seized him too, saying (to the other), "You have given it him to hide." He answered, "I have not given him anything." Whilst both were being beaten to death, an intelligent man passed by and heard from some of them what had happened. Seeing an ostrich roaming about the street, he enquired whether it was there when the jewel fell to the ground. "Yes," they said. "Then," said he, "this is the fellow you want." Accordingly, having compensated the owners of the ostrich, they slaughtered it and on ripping open its intestine discovered the stone. In that short time it had become reduced to something like half its former size, but the intestine had given it a tint which brought them a greater profit than they would have gained by selling it at its full weight, since the fire of the intestine is different from the (native) fire of the stone.

44

In the fly (*dhubab*) there are two good qualities. One of these is the facility with which it may be prevented from causing annoyance and discomfort. For if any person wish to make the flies quit his house and secure himself from being troubled by them without diminishing the amount of light in the house he has only to shut the door and they will hurry forth as fast as they can and try to outstrip each other in seeking the light and fleeing from the darkness. Then no sooner is the curtain let down and the door opened than the light will return and the people of the house will no longer be harassed by flies. If there be a slit in the door or if when it is shut one of the two folding leaves does not quite close on the other (that will serve them as a means of exit) and the flies often go out through the gap between the bottom of the door and the lintel. Thus it is easy to get rid of them and escape from their annoyance. With the mosquito (*ba'ud*) it is otherwise for just as the fly has greater power (for mischief) in the light so the mosquito is more tormenting and mischievous and bloodthirsty in the dark and it is not possible for people to let into their houses sufficient light to stop the activity of the mosquito because for this purpose they would have to admit the beams of the sun and there are no mosquitoes except in summer when the sun is unendurable. All light that is derived from the sun partakes of heat and light is never devoid of heat though heat is sometimes devoid of light. Hence while it is easily possible to contrive a remedy against flies this is difficult in the case of mosquitoes.

The second merit of the fly is that unless it ate the mosquito which it pursues and seeks after on the walls and in the corners of rooms people would be unable to stay in their houses. I am informed by a trustworthy authority that Muhammad son of Jahm said one day to some of his acquaintance. Do you know the lesson which we have learned with regard to the fly? They said No. But the fact is he replied that it eats mosquitoes and chases them and picks them up and destroys them. I will tell you how I

learned this. Formerly, when I wanted to take the siesta, I used to give orders that the flies should be cleared out and the curtain drawn and the door shut, an hour before noon. On the disappearance of the flies, the mosquitoes would collect in the house and become exceedingly strong and powerful and bite me violently as soon as I began to rest. Now on a certain day, I came in and found the room open and the curtain up. And when I lay down to sleep, there were no mosquitoes and I slept soundly, although I was very angry with the slaves. Next day they cleared out the flies and shut the door as usual, and on my coming to take the siesta I saw a multitude of mosquitoes. Then on another day they forgot to shut the door, and when I perceived that it was open I reviled them. However, when I came for the siesta, I did not find a single mosquito and I said to myself, 'Methinks, I have slept on the two days on which my precautions were neglected and have been hindered from sleeping whenever they were carefully observed. Why should not I try to-day the effect of leaving the door open? If I sleep three days with the door open and suffer no annoyance from the mosquitoes, I shall know that the right way is to have the flies and the mosquitoes together, because the flies destroy them, and that our remedy lies in keeping near us what we used to keep at a distance.' I made the experiment, and now the end of the matter is that whether we desire to remove the flies or destroy the mosquitoes, we can do it with very little trouble."

TABARÍ

MUHAMMAD son of Jarír, a native of Tabaristán—whence the name Tabarí, by which he is usually known—passed the most part of his life at Baghdád, where he died in A D 923. He was a man of immense learning and industry, and his great historical work, the *Annals of the Prophets and the Kings*, extends from the Creation to his own day. It is not a critical history, but a collection of narratives related, if possible, by eye-witnesses or contemporaries and handed down to the author through a series of narrators. Divergent accounts of the same event are given in full without any attempt to combine them. This is exemplified by the passage

translated below which comprises a portion of the long and dramatic description of the fall of the Persian Empire and the triumph of the Moslem arms. The decisive battle was fought at Kádisiya near Kufa in A.D. 637

45

The Battle of Kádisiya

The following narrative was transmitted to me in writing by Sari, who derived it from Shu'aib who had it from Saif who received it from Muhammad Talha and Amr with the chain of their authorities

The people of Babylonia demanded help from Yazdajird son of Shahriyár and sent to him this message. The Arabs have encamped at Kádisiya with every appearance of being bent on war. Since occupying the place they have left nothing undone: they have laid waste the territory between them and the Euphrates so thoroughly that no living soul is to be found except in the castles; the animals and all food that the castles could not hold have been carried off. They have not yet forced us to surrender but unless help come quickly we shall give ourselves up to them. The princes who owned estates on the shore of the Euphrates wrote letters to the same effect supporting this demand and urging Yazdajird to despatch Rustam to Babylonia. The Emperor resolved to do so and immediately sent for Rustam. It is my purpose, he said, to send you on this expedition. The greater the peril the greater the steps that must be taken to meet it. You are the bravest man of the Persians to day and you see well that the danger now confronting them is such as they have never faced since the House of Ardashír¹ reigned in the land. Rustam signified his readiness to obey and paid homage to his sovereign. Now, said the Emperor

I wish to look into your mind that I may know what you think. Therefore describe to me the Arabs and what they have done since they occupied Kádisiya and also describe the Persians and what they are suffering at the hands of the Arabs. The Arabs answered Rustam may be described

Ardashír Bábakán was the first and Yazdajird the last king of the Sásánian dynasty which reigned in Persia from A.D. 26 to A.D. 652

as wolves who found the shepherds off their guard and wrought havoc amongst the sheep ” “It is not so,” said the Emperor, “I asked you in the hope that you would give a precise description, so that I might encourage you to act as the case requires, but you have not spoken to the point. Learn from me, then, what the Arabs and the Persians are like. An eagle settles on a mountain to which the birds resort at night. They pass the night in their nests at the foot of the mountain, and when they peep out at dawn they see the eagle watching for them. Now, if any bird should go forth alone, he will swoop on it, so they are afraid to rise from their nests, and whenever one flies singly, the eagle snatches it. But if they all rose together, they would drive him away, or at the worst they all would escape except one, whereas rising in small parties they will be destroyed one after another. This is what the Arabs and the Persians are like. Act, therefore, accordingly.” “O King,” cried Rustam, “let me be! for the Arabs will fear the Persians so long as thou dost not provoke them to give me battle. I hope to preserve the royal House. Peradventure God may have aided us, and we may have hit upon the right strategy and tactics. In war, judgment and strategy sometimes avail more than a victory.” The Emperor scorned his advice and asked him what remained to be done. “In war,” said Rustam, “deliberation is better than haste, and this is an occasion for taking time. It will be to our advantage, and more grievous to our enemy, if we engage his armies in turn rather than inflict a single defeat on him.” As Yazdajird obstinately refused to listen, Rustam set out and pitched his camp at Sábát. Meanwhile frequent messengers came to the King with the object of inducing him to dismiss Rustam and send another general, and the people gathered about him in great numbers. Sa’d the son of Abú Wakkás¹, having been informed of this by spies from Híra and from the Banú Salúbá, wrote the news to ‘Umar². Alarmed by the appeals for help which poured in, through Ázádhmard, son of Ázádhbih, from the inhabitants of Babylonia, Yazdajird, who was a headstrong and obstinate man, cast prudence aside and ordered Rustam to move against the

¹ The Moslem general

² The Caliph

foe In vain did Rustam repeat what he had already urged O King he exclaimed thy rejection of the right course has obliged me to extol and justify myself I should not have spoken thus had I found any way of avoiding it Now for thine own and thy family's and thy kingdom's sake I beseech thee in God's name let me remain in my camp while Jálinus advances If fortune be with us well and good if not I shall be prepared to send forward another Then if we find no escape and all means fail we shall resist the weakened and exhausted enemy with our whole strength Yazdajird however was determined that Rustam should march

What follows was written to me by Sari who had it from Shu'ayb who learned it from Saif who received it from Nadr son of Sari al Dabbí whose authority was Ibnu l Rufail who was informed by his father that when Rustam had encamped at Sábát and collected the implements and munitions of war he despatched his vanguard 40 000 strong under Jálinus bidding him proceed cautiously and wait for orders before making a rapid advance His right wing he entrusted to Hurmuzán his left to Mihrán son of Bahrám al Rází and his rearguard to Bairuzán He sought to encourage the Emperor saying If God shall grant us victory over the enemy the way will be open for us into their country and we shall keep them busy in defence of their native land until they consent to make peace or submit to the same conditions as before But when Sa'd's envoys returned from their audience with the Emperor Rustam dreamed a dream which he liked not and he boded ill and was loth to march and meet the foe Perplexed and hesitating he asked the Emperor to let Jálinus advance while he (Rustam) stayed behind to consider what should be done

Jálinus he said is as capable as I although my name inspires them with greater terror If he win the day that is all we desire if it go against us I will send another captain like him and we can count upon repelling the invaders at least for a time for so long as I am not defeated the Persians will set their hopes on me and will be of good heart while the Arabs will feel awe of me in their breasts and will not

dare to attack, so long as I refrain from giving them battle, but if I engage them they will be emboldened for ever and the spirit of the Persians will be broken for ever " Then Rustam despatched his vanguard, 40,000 strong, and marched himself with 60,000, leaving 20,000 to protect his rear

According to the written account which I received from Sarí and he, through Shu'aib and Saif, from Muhammad, Talha, Ziyád, and 'Amr with their chain of authorities, when the Emperor insisted on marching against the enemy, Rustam wrote to his brother and the chief men of his country as follows "*From Rustam to Bindawán, the satrap of the Court, the arrow of the Persians, who is the man to deal with any grave event that may come to pass, by whose hand God will shatter the mightiest host and subdue the strongest fortress to him and those near him* Put your castles in order and prepare and be prepared The Arabs, as though it were under your very eyes, have pushed into your country and forced you to fight for your land and your children My advice was to hold them in check and wear them out by delay till their fortune should fail, but the King refused "

A certain man, whose story was handed down by Salt son of Bahrám to Saif, by Saif to Shu'aib, by Shu'aib to Sarí, and given to me in writing by the last-named, has related that when Yazdajird commanded Rustam to march from Sábát, that general wrote to his brother in the aforesaid terms or nearly so, and that he added "The Fish (Piscis) has troubled the water, and the ostrich-stars (in the constellation Sagittarius) are fair, and Venus is fair, and the Scales (Libra) are even, and Mars has disappeared I doubt not but that our enemies will conquer us and gain possession of the countries adjoining us And the most grievous thing of all is that the King has said, 'You will march against them, or assuredly I will take the field in person ' Now, therefore, I am going to march against them "

Sarí communicated to me the following narrative, having received it from Shu'aib, who had it from Saif, on the authority of Nadr son of Sarí, who was informed by Ibnu 'l-Rufail, whose father told him that the man who encouraged Yazdajird to despatch Rustam was the slave of

Jábán the Emperor's astrologer. This youth was a native of Furát Bádakla. Yazdajird sent for him and asked his opinion concerning Rustam's march and the coming battle with the Arabs. The slave was afraid to speak the truth so he lied to him. Rustam had much the same skill in astrology as the slave and because of his knowledge he set out with a heavy heart but the Emperor being deceived by the slave made light of it. And Jábán wrote to Jushnasmáh as follows:

The power of the Persians has departed and their enemy has been made to prevail over them. The empire of the Magians is gone and the empire of the Arabs is come and their religion is victorious. Do thou therefore obtain from them a covenant of protection and let not the things now passing beguile thee. Hasten! Hasten! ere thou be taken captive. As soon as the letter reached Jushnasmáh he went forth to join the Arabs and betook himself to Mu'anná who was then at al Atík with some cavalry. Mu'anná sent him to Sa'd, by whom after he had obtained a covenant of protection for himself and his family and his vassals, he was sent back to Persia as a spy. He presented Mu'anná with a dish of *saludhar* (a confection of starch honey and water).

What is this? said Mu'anná to his wife. 'I think' she answered that his poor wife intended to make *asída* (porridge) and has done it thus. Bad luck to her! cried Mu'anná.

• • • • •

What I am about to relate was given me in writing by Sarí. He derived it through Shu'aib and Saif from Mu'hammad Talha and Ziyád—with whom Ibn Mikhrik concurs—on the authority of a man of (the tribe) Tai.

On the day when the cavalry were engaged the horsemen fought from dawn to noon. As the sun declined the infantry on both sides advanced to battle and fought with great noise and din until midnight. The night of (the battle of) Armáth was called the *Had'a* (stillness) while the night of (the battle of) Aghwáth was called the *Sawad* which word signifies the first half of the night. On the day of Aghwáth at Kádísíya the Moslems were always confident of victory and most of

the Persian leaders fell. In the centre their cavalry turned and fled, while their infantry stood firm, and if the cavalry had not rallied, Rustam himself would have been taken prisoner. After the first part of the night was gone, the Moslems passed the remainder as the Persians had done on the night of (the battle of) Armáth, and from evening until they retired (to rest) they kept shouting the names of their clans. When Sa'd heard the shouts, he went to sleep, saying to one of his companions, "If they go on shouting, do not wake me, for in that case they are superior to their enemy, and if they cease shouting and the Persians also keep quiet, do not wake me, for then they are equally matched, but wake me if you hear the Persians shouting, for that will be a bad sign."

When the battle waxed hot in the first half of the night, Abú Mihjan, who was imprisoned and in chains in the castle, went up to Sa'd at eventide and besought him to pardon and set him free. From Sa'd he got nothing but rough words, so he came down again, and approaching Salmà the daughter of Khasafa¹, "O Salmà," said he, "O daughter of the house of Khasafa, wilt thou do a kindness?" "What is it?" she asked. "Wilt thou set me at liberty and lend me the black and white mare? By God, I promise that if He save me I will return to thee and put my foot back in the gyve." "How should I do such a thing?" said she. Then Abú Mihjan began hobbling to and fro in his chains and reciting.

(Metre *Tawil*)

"'Tis sorrow enough for me that here I am left in chains,
Fast-bound, while against the foe our horsemen the lances hurl.
Whene'er I would rise, the iron galls me, and none may pass
The barred doors that hem me in and stifle the captive's cry
And yet had I store of wealth and brothers a many once,
But now they have left me lone no brother at need have I
I vow unto God and will not break unto Him my vow,
To visit no more the booths of wine, if I go forth free"

Salmà said, "I pray God may guide me to do what is best. I am content with thy promise, but as for the mare," she added, as she loosed his chains, "I will not lend her to thee."

¹ Salmà was the wife of Sa'd

Then she returned to her room Abu Mihjan however led the mare through the castle gate adjoining the moat and having mounted her rode on cautiously until when he was in front of the Moslems right wing he cried *Allah akbar* and charged against the left wing of the enemy brandishing his lance and sword between the two armies According to my authorities the mare was saddled but Sa'id and Kasim state that she was barebacked Then he returned by the Moslem rear to their left wing and shouting the war cry charged the Persian right brandishing his lance and making play with his sword as before Then he returned by the rear to the Moslem centre rode forth alone in front of the infantry and once more charged the hostile ranks in the fashion which has been described That night he pressed the enemy sorely The Arabs marvelled at him without knowing who he was for they had not seen him in the day time Some of them declared he was the first of Hashim's men or Hashim himself¹ Sa'id who with bowed head was gazing on his troops from the top of the castle exclaimed

By God were not Abu Mihjan in prison I should say it is he and the piebald mare! Some of the soldiers said

If Khadir (Elias) takes part in battles we believe the man on the piebald mare is Khadir Said others Were it not that the angels have naught to do with fighting we should have said he is an angel sent to bid us stand firm They never thought of Abu Mihjan or recognised him because he was in prison that night At midnight when the Persians stopped fighting and the Moslems slowly withdrew from the field Abu Mihjan returned to the castle went in by the gate whence he had gone out laid aside his armour and unsaddled the mare Then he put back his feet in the irons saying

(Metre *Wafir*)

Well knoweth Thakif my clan—no need for bragging—
That we are their noblest knights and their dearest swordsmen
The richest of all in mail coats long and ample
The stubbornest when our rival will stand no longer

¹ Hashim son of Utba was approaching with reinforcements from Syria

And we in the days of peace are their chosen envoys—
 Whoso to the truth is blind, let him ask and learn it!
 Naught knew they of me, that night at Kádisiya,
 For never I told the troops I was out of prison
 Held back if I be, then sore is my trouble surely,
 And if I go free, with slaughter I feast the foemen!"

"O Abú Mihjan," cried Salmà, "for what cause did this man imprison thee?" "By God," he replied, "not for eating or drinking anything unlawful, but I was given to wine in my heathen days, and I am a poet the poetry creeps over my tongue, and sometimes my tongue sends it on to my lips, and so my praise is ill bestowed, and that is why he cast me into prison I said

(Metre *Tawil*)

'Friend, bury me, when I die, a stock of the vine beside,
 That after my death its roots may moisten my thirsty bones
 And bury me not amidst the desert, for lo, I fear
 Lest when I am dead I ne'er shall taste of it evermore
 I pray thee, spill o'er my grave a cup of the saffron wine!
 Ay, me it hath captive ta'en who carried it oft along'"

Salmà's anger with Sa'd continued through the evening of Aımáth and the night of the *Had'a* and the night of the *Sawád* Next morning she came to him and made up the quarrel and told him her tale and the tale of Abú Mihjan Sa'd called him into his presence and set him free "Go," he said "I will not punish thee for aught thou sayest until thou do it" "Truly, by God," said Abú Mihjan, "I will never allow my tongue to praise any shameful thing again"

MAS'ÚDÍ

MAS'ÚDÍ, who died in A D 956, was a great traveller, an enthusiastic seeker after knowledge, and the most versatile and discursive of historians The following extracts are taken from the *Muríju 'l-Dhahab*, an abridgement of his larger works which are all but entirely lost to us The text of the *Muríju* has been published with a translation in French by Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille (Paris, 1861-77)

The Barmecides

When the Barmecides were appointed viziers by (Hārūn) al Rashīd on his accession to the Caliphate they took entire control of the revenues so that he could not obtain even small sums of money which he required. In the year A H 187 he destroyed the whole family. Opinions differ as to his motive. Ostensibly it was because they seized the revenues and set at liberty a man belonging to the House of Abu Tālib whom the Caliph had placed in their charge but the real cause is obscure. Various explanations have been given and God knows best what they are worth. We shall put them down here as they occur to us after we have cited some characteristic anecdotes of the Barmecides in the days of their power.

A person well acquainted with their history relates that one day when Yahyā son of Khālid was present al Rashīd received a letter from the post master in Khurāsān informing him that al Fadl son of Yahyā was neglecting his duties as governor in order to devote himself to hunting and other amusements. Having read the letter al Rashīd threw it to Yahyā. My good father¹ said he read this and write to your son a letter that will prevent him from behaving in such a way. Yahyā took the Caliph's inkhorn and wrote to al Fadl on the back of the letter as follows. My dear son may God keep thee safe and give me joy of thee! The Prince of the Faithful has learned with displeasure that hunting and amusements leave thee no time to attend to public affairs. Now return to what will do thee more honour for a man's good or bad habits are the only means whereby his contemporaries know him. Farewell. At the foot of the letter he added these verses

Seek glory all day long no effort spare
And patiently the loved one's absence bear
But when the shades of night advancing slow
O'er every vice a veil of darkness throw

¹ Al Rashīd had so deep a respect for Yahyā that in speaking to him he always called him my father (Ibn Khallikān)

Beguile the hours with all thy heart's delight
 The day of prudent men begins at night
 Many there be, esteemed of life austere,
 Who nightly enter on a strange career.
 Night o'er them keeps her sable curtain drawn,
 And merrily they pass from eve to dawn
 Who but a fool his pleasures would expose
 To spying rivals and censorious foes?"

"Admirable, my dear father!" exclaimed al-Rashíd, who had followed with his eye every word written by Yahyà. As for al-Fadl, after the letter reached him, he never quitted the mosque during the daytime until he laid down his office and returned from Khurásán.

47

*The siege of Baghdád by Táhir and Harthama,
 the generals of the Caliph Ma'mún*

Amín now took from the treasury a sum of 500,000 dirhems, which he distributed amongst the new officers, and he also presented each of them with a vial of perfume, but gave nothing to the veterans. Táhir, on being informed of this by his spies, entered into correspondence with the malcontents, alluring them with promises and inciting the subalterns against their superiors, and kindled their resentment to such a pitch that on Wednesday, the 6th of Dhu 'l-Hijja, A.H. 196, they rose in revolt. Thereupon Táhir moved from Yásiriya, camped outside the Anbár gate, and laid siege to Baghdád. Fighting continued by day and night until both armies were on the point of exhaustion. The buildings and monuments of the city were ruined and food became excessively dear. It often happened that in the same family one was a partisan of Muhammad (Amín), while another was devoted to the cause of Ma'mún. Brothers fought against their brothers, and sons against their fathers. Houses were destroyed, palaces burnt, and valuable property carried off as plunder.

Meanwhile from the east Harthama son of A'yan despatched Zuhair son of al-Musayyab al-Dabbí, who occupied

al Máṭir in the neighbourhood of Kalwádhà and levied tithes on the merchandise coming by boat from Basra and Wásit then he placed the catapults in position to bombard the city and encamped in the marshland of Kalwádhà and in Jazīra This beleaguering inflicted great suffering on the inhabitants and a sortie was made by a force of vagabonds and others who had escaped from prison They fought almost naked every man had short breeches and a cloth wrapped about his waist a helmet which they called *khudha* made of palm leaf fibre and a buckler consisting of palm leaves and rush mats which had been tarred and stuffed with gravel and sand Each company of ten was commanded by an *arif* ten *arifs* by a *nakīb* ten *nalībs* by a *ka id* and ten *kā ids* by an *amīr* All these officers were provided with mounts according to the number of soldiers under their command thus an *arif* had in addition to his company of fighting men several men on whom he rode and similarly the chiefs of higher rank were mounted on naked men with bells and tassels of red and yellow wool on their necks and harnessed with reins and bridles while brooms and fly whisks served them instead of tails In such fashion an *arif* would ride to battle in front of him his ten soldiers with their palm leaf helmets and rush mat bucklers not otherwise the *nalīb* the *la id* and the *amīr* Spectators would gather and stand watching these men fight against adversaries who were not only mounted on excellent horses but protected by cuirasses hauberks coats of mail and brassarts and armed with lances and shields of Tibetan hide To resume our narrative the naked ones defeated Zuhair but were put to rout on the arrival of reinforcements from Harthama The human steeds threw their riders and the whole force was driven back into the besieged city at the point of the sword They left a large number of dead and amongst the slain were many who came to look on

Amīn being hard pressed for money caused the gold and silver vessels to be melted in secret and paid his troops with coin struck from these Nevertheless Táhir got possession of Harbiya and other suburbs adjoining the Anbār Harb and Kuṭrabbul gates The war now raged in the middle of

the western city, and the catapults wrought havoc between the armies on either side. A poet, known as Blind 'Alí, refers to this in the following lines

“O ye catapult-shooters, all of you are without pity!
 Ye care nothing for friend or enemy
 Woe to you! Know ye whom ye are shooting? The passers-by
 in the street
 Many a fair young woman of gracious mien and like a leafy
 bough,
 One that never knew the difference between a curtained bower
 and a crow's belly,
 Hath been cast forth from the world where she enjoyed a sheltered
 and pleasant life
 There was no help for it she had to go into the street on the day
 when her house was in flames”

The Karkh quarter and other districts on both sides of the river were scenes of conflagration and ruin. The splendours of Baghdád disappeared. As the situation grew desperate, the inhabitants, leaving the streets and lanes where they lived, wandered from place to place, and panic seized all hearts. The struggle between the partisans of Ma'mún and Amín lasted fourteen months. Baghdád could no longer house its population. Mosques were deserted and public prayers abandoned. Such calamities had never fallen upon the city since it was founded by Abú Ja'far al-Mansúr

* * * * *

While Baghdád was thus a prey to faction, the plight of Amín and his supporters became more and more critical. A great battle took place in the western quarter in the district called Dáru 'l-Rakík. The slaughter was terrible: every road, street, alley, and lane was filled with corpses. Foe rushed on foe, shouting, “Hurrah for Ma'mún!” and “Hurrah for the deposed Caliph¹!” All the houses were pillaged and fired. For any one who escaped from these horrors—man or woman, young or old—it was the greatest blessing and joy to reach the camp of Táhir with as much as they could save; there, they felt that their lives and property were secure.

¹ Amín

One of the captains of Khurásán came to Táhír. Seeing the naked unarmed men engaged in battle he turned to him scornfully and said: 'What can these fellows without arms accomplish when opposed to our valiant soldiers who are so well armed and equipped?' He drew his bow, fitted an arrow to the string and stepped forth from the ranks. The challenge was answered by a naked wretch with a rush mat shield in his hand, carrying under his arm a bag filled with stones and brickbats. As the captain shot, the vagabond covered himself and every arrow pierced the shield or just missed. Those that found the target he plucked out and placed in a receptacle shaped like a quiver which he had fashioned in the shield and he continued doing this until the captain, having no more arrows left, charged at him in order to deal a mortal blow. The vagabond took a stone from his bag and cast it and hit the captain's eye; then he smote him with a second stone which almost brought him down from his horse. His helmet fell to the ground and he only saved himself by flight. He retired saying: 'These are not men, they are devils.'

Every day the fighting became more severe, both sides showing the utmost obstinacy. Of the troops defending the deposed Caliph (Amin) there now remained none but naked rascallions with palm leaf helmets and rush mat bucklers. Táhír, pressing his advantage, occupied one street after another and as each passed into his hands its inhabitants joined the victorious army. Meanwhile his engines of war wrought great destruction in the quarters that still held out. He then began to dig trenches in the houses, hotels and palaces which lay between himself and the defenders. His forces were strong and encouraged by success while their adversaries were falling back and being gradually weakened. When Táhír saw what resolution the partisans of Amin displayed amidst the ruins, conflagrations and carnage, he cut off their supplies from Basra and Wásit and blocked all the roads. The result was that whereas in a street occupied by Ma munís twenty pounds of bread cost a dirhem, in a Muhammadí¹ district a dirhem would purchase only one

¹ Muhammad was the name of the Caliph Amin.

pound The misery of the besieged inhabitants was increased by famine, and they despaired of relief

The position of the dethroned Caliph was extremely critical Harthama son of A'yan lay encamped in the eastern quarter, while most of the western was held by Táhir, and Amín remained in the city of Abú Ja'far (Old Baghdád) He took counsel with his favourites as to how he should save himself every one present gave an opinion and advised a course of action "Enter into correspondence with Táhir," said one of them, "and swear to him an oath which he can trust, that you will hand over your sovereignty to him: perhaps he will comply with your request" "Be thy mother bereaved of thee!" cried Amín, "I was a fool to ask thee for advice Dost not thou see that this man will never be induced to act disloyally? If Ma'mún had depended on his own exertions and managed affairs according to his own judgment, would he have gained the tenth part of what Táhir has gained for him? My spies have thoroughly explored his intentions, and never have I found him seeking aught but noble deeds, high fame, and good faith How shall I hope to corrupt him by gifts of money and make him a traitor? Were he willing to recognise me as Caliph and attach himself to my cause, I should not care though the Turks and Dailamites declared war on me I should feel as safe as Ziyád ibn abíhí¹ when the Azdites took him under their protection, on which occasion Abu l'-Aswad al-Du'ílí said

'When he saw them assailing his vizier, and when after a long delay they moved against himself,
He came to the Azdites, dreading that which has no alternative,
and the course taken by Ziyád was the best
They bade him welcome and said, "Thou hast done right now
make open war on whomsoever thou wilt!"
Then he feared no more any foe in the world, even if his enemies
had brought against him a power equal to that of 'Ad²'

¹ Governor of Basra under the Caliph Mu'áwiya His parentage was uncertain, and therefore he is often called "ibn abíhí," i.e. "son of his father"

² The pre-historic inhabitants of Hadramaut in South Arabia They are described as a people of gigantic strength and stature

By God I wish that Tahir would consent I would let him dispose freely of my treasure and surrender my authority to him and be well satisfied to live under his protection But I know I shall not escape from him not though I had a thousand lives! O Prince of the Faithful said al Sindí you have spoken the truth Were you his father Husain son of Mus ab he would not spare you Harthama then exclaimed Amin but how shall we find refuge with him? *for the hour of safety is past*¹ He made overtures to Harthama who accepted his conditions and promised to defend him from those who would kill him On hearing this Tahir was indignant and his anger did not abate until Harthama promised to embark his prisoner at the quay adjoining the Khurásán gate and convey him to Tahir's camp with any other persons whom that general might desire

On the night which Amin had chosen for his escape—Thursday night the 25th of Muharram A H 198—a number of his adherents known as the vagabonds (*al ša'dlik*) brave soldiers and valiant gentlemen presented themselves before him Prince of the Faithful they said you have no loyal friend and counsellor but we are 7000 warriors and in your stables are 7000 horses Let every man mount his horse then let us open one of the gates and ride forth from the city to-night The darkness will prevent pursuit and by morning we shall be in Jazīra (Upper Mesopotamia) and Diyār Rabī'a There you will collect money and men then march through Syria and into Egypt You will find troops and money in plenty and your cause will prosper once more By God cried Amin this is the plan! He adopted it and resolved to carry it out but amongst his pages and personal attendants were spies who sent to Tahir hourly reports of what was happening in the palace Tahir therefore got the news immediately He heard it with alarm knowing that the plan would be likely to succeed Accordingly he despatched the following message to Sulaimán son of Mansur Ibn Nahík and al Sindí son of Sháhak who were in attendance on Amin Unless you deter him from this enterprise I will lay your houses in ruins ravage your

¹ Koran XXXVIII 2

estates, confiscate your fortunes, and take your lives " They at once went to Amín and caused him to abandon the project

As soon as Harthama's skiff arrived at the Khurásán gate, Amín called for his black horse, Zuhairí, which had white streaks on its legs and a white star on its forehead, and summoning his two sons, Músà and 'Abdullah, embraced them and drew their faces close to his own and burst into tears, saying, "I commit you to God's care I do not know whether I shall ever meet you again " Then he set off, preceded by a torch his dress was white and he wore a black *tailasán* (hood), which covered his head When he came to the quay beside the Khurásán gate, the skiff was waiting He dismounted and severed the hocks of his horse while Harthama, advancing to receive him, kissed him between the eyes

Táhir, informed by his spies of the Caliph's flight, had sent some men of Herát, sailors, and others in barges on the river Harthama had only a few of his men with him When they put off from the shore, Táhir's fellows stripped and diving under the skiff upset it, so that all on board were thrown into the water Harthama could do nothing but save his own life he caught hold of a barge and clambered into it, then he returned to his camp on the eastern bank As for Amín, he tore the clothes from his body and swam until he landed near Sarát at the quarters of Karín al-Dairání, one of Táhir's equerries Here a groom, noticing that he smelt of musk and perfume, arrested the fugitive and brought him to Karín The equerry begged Táhir for leave to kill him and was conducting him to his master when the order came The last words of Amín were, "*We belong to God, and to Him we are returning*"¹ I am the cousin of the Prophet and the brother of Ma'mún "

48

The ass that died of love

The Caliph Mutawakkil said to Abu 'l-'Anbas "Tell me about your ass and his death and the poetry which he recited to you in a dream " "Yes, O Prince of the Faithful. my ass had more sense than all the cadis together, 'twas not in

¹ Koran, II, 151

him to run away or stumble Suddenly he fell ill and died
 Afterwards I saw him in a dream and said to him O my
 ass did not I make thy water cool and thy barley clean and
 show thee the utmost kindness? Why didst thou die so
 suddenly? What was the matter with thee? True he
 answered but the day you stopped to converse with so
 and so the perfumer about such and such an affair a
 beautiful she ass passed by I saw her and lost my heart and
 loved so passionately that I died of grief pining for her
 O my ass said I didst thou make a poem on the subject?
 Yes he said then he chanted

I was frenzied by a she ass	at the door of a perfumer
She enthralled me smiling coyly	showing me her lovely side teeth
Charmed me with a pair of soft cheeks	coloured like the <i>shakurān</i> ¹
For her sake I died and had I	lived then great were my dishonour!

I said O my ass what is the *shakurān*? This he replied
 is one of the strange and uncommon words in the language of
 asses Mutawakkil was delighted and ordered the minstrels
 to set the poem of the ass to music and sing it on that day
 No one had ever seen him so gay and joyous before He
 redoubled his marks of favour to Abu l Anbas and loaded
 him with gifts

49

The Caliph Ma mun and the Ṣufī

According to Yahyà son of Aktham Ma mun used to hold
 a *salon* every Tuesday for the discussion of questions in
 theology and law On presenting themselves the divines
 and learned men of different sects were shown into a chamber
 spread with carpets Tables were brought in laden with food
 and drink of which they were invited to partake after having
 washed their hands and any one who found his boots un-
 comfortable might take them off or lay aside his *kalansuwa*
 (bonnet) if it were burdensome When the repast was
 finished servants fetched braziers of incense and the guests
 perfumed themselves then they left the room and were
 admitted into the presence of the Caliph He would debate

¹ The reading is uncertain

with them, in a manner as fair and impartial and unlike the haughtiness of a monarch as can be imagined, until sunset, when a second repast was served, after which they departed to their homes

Now one day (Yahyà continued), whilst the Caliph was thus engaged, 'Alí son of Sálíh, the chamberlain, entered and said, "O Prince of the Faithful, there is a man at the gate, seeking admission to the *salon*. He is dressed in coarse white garments, tucked up." Knowing he was one of the Súfis, I was about to make a sign that he should not be admitted, but Ma'mún said immediately, "Let him come in." The stranger, whose garb was of the fashion already described, advanced with his shoes in his hand to the edge of the carpet, where he stopped and cried, "Peace and God's mercy and blessings on you all!" Ma'mún returned his salutation, gave him permission to approach, and bade him sit down. "Have I leave to address thee?" he asked. "Speak," said the Caliph, "if you know that your words will be acceptable to God." "Tell me," said the stranger, "of this throne on which thou art seated didst thou ascend it by agreement and consent of the Moslems, or by using violence and force to gain the mastery over them?" "I ascended it," replied the Caliph, "neither by agreement on their part nor by violence on mine. Before me there was a ruler¹ who directed the affairs of the Moslems and whom the Moslems suffered willingly or unwillingly he appointed me and another² to govern the state after his death, and bound those Moslems who were present to recognise his act, further, he demanded the oath of allegiance to me and to my associate from the pilgrims in the holy house of Allah, and they gave it voluntarily or otherwise. My partner in the succession went the way which he went, leaving the sole authority in my hands. I knew that I required the unanimous consent of the Moslems in the East and West, but on reflection I saw that, if I entrust the state to their charge, the firm bond of Islam will be loosened, covenants upset, the empire dismembered, all thrown into confusion and disorder and civil strife the laws of God Almighty will not be kept, no one will

¹ Hárún al-Rashíd

² Amín

make the pilgrimage to Mecca or join in the holy war the Moslems will have no government to unite and direct them the roads will be cut by brigands the weak oppressed with impunity by the strong Therefore I assumed this authority in order to protect the Moslems and combat their enemies and ensure the safety of their roads and hold my subjects in hand until they agree and consent with one voice to the election of a man whom they approve To him I will resign my office and I will acknowledge his authority like any other Moslem Take this message from me to the Moslem people! I am ready to abdicate as soon as they shall have agreed upon a chief Farewell said the stranger God's mercy and blessings on you all! On his departure Ma mun ordered Ali son of Sálh to have him followed and ascertain where he was going The chamberlain obeyed When he returned he said O Prince of the Faithful I despatched some of my agents after him He went to a mosque in which were fifteen men resembling him in dress and appearance They said to him Didst thou meet the man? Yes he replied What did he say to thee? Nothing but good he told me that he had taken control of affairs in order to keep the roads safe and maintain the pilgrimage and carry on the holy war and defend the oppressed and see to it that the divine laws do not become vain but when the Moslems agree upon a chief he will abdicate and hand over his authority to the man of their choice They answered that they saw no harm in that and dispersed forthwith

Yahyà added in conclusion Ma mun turned to me and said O Abu Muhammad we have satisfied these folk very easily O Prince of the Faithful I replied glory to God who has inspired thee with sure and right judgment in word and deed

50

Pearl fishing

The pearl fishing in the Persian Ocean lasts from the beginning of Nisán (April) to the end of Ailul (September) there is no fishing during the rest of the year In our earlier works we have enumerated all the pearl fisheries in this ocean which is the only one where pearls are to be found

they are peculiar to the sea that washes the coasts of Abyssinia and Khárák and Kutur and 'Umán and Sarandíb (Ceylon) and other countries We have also mentioned how the pearl is formed and the different opinions attributing its origin to rain-drops and to many things besides, and have described pearls of both sorts, namely, the ancient and those of recent formation, which are called *mahár* and known as *balbal* The flesh and fat in the shell is an animal it feels alarm for the pearl within it on account of the divers, as a mother fears for her child Concerning the manner of diving, we have previously explained that the divers never touch meat, but live on fish and dates and similar foods, and how they slit their ears at the base to make an exit for the breath instead of the nostrils, because they plug the latter with something made of *dhabl*, that is, the shell of the sea-tortoise which is used for making combs, or of horn, but not of wood it penetrates the nostrils like an iron arrow-head In their ears they put oiled cotton, and when they are at the bottom of the sea a little of the oil exudes and gives them a bright light They smear their feet and legs with black pigment for fear of being swallowed by the sea-beasts the blackness scares these monsters The divers at the bottom of the sea utter piercing cries like a dog's yelp in order to make themselves heard by one another All this we have related in our preceding books with much curious information about the divers and the pearl-fishing, the pearl and its animal, and the qualities, marks, prices, and weights of pearls

51

Character of the Caliph Muhtadí

Muhtadí-billah had set himself to lead a virtuous and religious life He called the men of learning to his court, conferred dignities on the divines, and included them all in his bounty and affection He used to say, "O sons of Háshim, let me follow the path trodden by 'Umar the son of 'Abdu 'l-'Azíz, so that I may be amongst you what 'Umar was amongst the sons of Umayya¹." He restricted luxury in

¹ The "sons of Háshim" are the 'Abbásids, whose ancestor, 'Abbás, was Háshim's grandson 'Umar son of 'Abdu 'l-'Azíz, the eighth Umayyad Caliph, was a man of great piety

articles of dress and furniture and food and drink. By his command the gold and silver vessels in the treasury were put out and broken and coined into dinars and dirhems and he gave orders that the painted figures adorning the rooms of the palace should be effaced. He slaughtered the rams which were set to butt against each other in the presence of the Caliphs and the fighting cocks and killed all the wild beasts in the menagerie. He also forbade the use of brocade carpets and every sort of rug or carpet that is not expressly sanctioned by the Mohammedan religious law. It was the custom of the Caliphs before him to spend 10 000 dirhems daily on their table but Muhtadī abolished that practice and assigned a sum of about 100 dirhems to meet the daily cost of his table and his entire maintenance. Often he would fast for several days at a time. It is said that after he was murdered his baggage was removed from the place where he had sought refuge and they came upon a small padlocked chest which belonged to him. On opening it instead of the money or jewels which it was supposed to contain they found a *jubba* (shirt) of wool or camel's hair and an iron collar. They questioned his attendant who declared that as soon as darkness fell the Caliph used to put on the *jubba* and the collar and pray bowing and prostrating himself until dawn and that he would sleep for an hour after the second night prayer and then rise. Shortly before his assassination when he had performed the prayer of sunset and was about to break his fast one of his intimate friends heard him say

O God it is a true saying of Thy apostle Mohammed (God bless him!) that 'Thou dost never turn away the supplication of a just Imam—and I have taken pains to act justly towards my people or of one who is wronged—and I am suffering wrong or of one who has not yet broken his fast—and I am still fasting. Having uttered these words he began to call down vengeance on his enemies and pray that he might be delivered from their violence

52

A ghost story from Baghdad

In this year (A H 284 = A D 897) the Caliph Mu tadid saw an apparition. It appeared in his palace in various guises

now as a white-bearded anchorite wearing the customary garb of Christian ascetics, now as a handsome youth, who had a black beard and a different kind of dress, now as an old man with a white beard and in the attire of a merchant. Sometimes it held in its hand a drawn sword, with which it smote and killed the Caliph's attendants. Although the doors were shut and bolted, it used to appear wherever he was in a room or court or any other place. He saw it on the roof of the palace which he had built for himself. There was much talk about it: the story spread amongst high and low and was carried abroad by the caravans. As to the nature of the apparition, every one had his own theory. Some thought the Caliph was haunted and tormented by a malignant demon, while others maintained that it was a believing Jinní (spirit) who, seeing him set on a course of crime and bloodshed, appeared in order to restrain and deter him. According to others, a servant in the palace had fallen in love with one of the Caliph's slave-girls, and by invoking the aid of (natural) philosophy had contrived some peculiar drugs which rendered him invisible when he put them in his mouth, but all this is conjecture and speculation. Mu'tadid summoned the enchanters. He became exceedingly agitated and alarmed, and in his distraction he slaughtered or drowned a number of his male and female servants, others he flogged and imprisoned. In our book entitled *Akhbáru 'l-zamán* (the History of the World) we have related the whole story, together with the opinion attributed to Plato on the subject, as well as what happened to Shighb, mother of the Caliph Muktaḍir, and the reason why al-Mu'tadid threw her into gaol and wished to disfigure her by cutting off her nose.

MUTANABBÍ

THE name of Mutanabbí (died in A D 965) will always be remembered in connexion with that of his patron, the Hamdánid prince Saifu'ddaula, whose court at Aleppo was thronged with poets and eminent literary men. Any one who reads him in Arabic must admire the splendour of his rhetoric, the luxuriance of his imagination, and the energy and aptness of his diction, but in a translation these great qualities are overshadowed by others less pleasing to our taste, which have left their mark on the poetic style of many who wrote after him in Arabic or Persian.

53

How glows mine heart for him whose heart to me is cold
 Who liketh ill my ease and me in fault doth hold!
 Why should I hide a love that hath worn thin my frame?
 To Saifu ddaula all the world avows the same
 Though love of his high star unites us would that we
 According to our love might so divide the fee!
 Him have I visited when sword in sheath was laid
 And I have seen him when in blood swam every blade
 Him both in peace and war the best of all mankind
 Whose crown of excellence was still his noble mind
 Do foes by flight escape thine onset thou dost gain
 A chequered victory half of pleasure half of pain
 So puissant is the fear thou strik'st them with it stands
 Instead of thee and works more than thy warriors hands
 Unsought the field is thine thou need'st not further strain
 To chase them from their holes in mountain or in plain
 What! fore thy fierce attack whene'er an army reels
 Must thy ambitious soul press hot upon their heels?
 Thy task it is to rout them on the battle ground
 No shame to thee if they in flight have safety found
 Or thinkest thou perchance that victory is sweet
 Only when scimitars and necks each other greet
 O justest of the just save in thy deeds to me!
 Thou art accused and thou O Sire must judge the plea
 Look I implore thee well! Let not thine eye bejoked
 See fat in empty froth in all that glisters gold!
 What use and profit reaps a mortal of his sight
 If darkness unto him be indistinct from light?
 My deep poetic art the blind have eyes to see
 My verses ring in ears as deaf as deaf can be
 They wander far abroad whilst I am unaware
 But men collect them watchfully with toil and care
 Oft hath my laughing mien prolonged the insulter's sport
 Until with claw and mouth I cut his rudeness short
 Ah when the lion bares his teeth suspect his guile
 Nor fancy that the lion shows to thee a smile!

I have slain the foe that sought my heart's blood, many a time,
 Riding a noble mare whose back none else may climb,
 Whose hind and fore-legs seem in galloping as one;
 Nor hand nor foot requireth she to urge her on
 And oh, the days when I have swung my fine-edged glaive
 Amidst a sea of death where wave was dashed on wave!
 The desert knows me well, the night, the mounted men,
 The battle and the sword, the paper and the pen!

54

Shame hitherto was wont my tears to stay,
 But now by shame they will no more be stayed,
 So that each bone seems through its skin to sob,
 And every vein to swell the sad cascade
 Her beauty could dismay the young gazelle.
 No wonder stricken me it hath dismayed
 She uncovered pallor veiled her at farewell
 No veil 'twas, yet her cheeks it cast in shade,
 So seemed they, while tears trickled over them,
 Gold with a double row of pearls inlaid
 She loosed three sable tresses of her hair,
 And thus of night four nights at once she made,
 But when she lifted to the moon in heaven
 Her face, two moons together I surveyed

55

Naught kills the noble like forgiveness yet
 Where are the noble who no boon forget?
 Kindness subdues the man of generous race,
 But only makes more insolent the base
 As ill doth bounty in sword's place accord
 With honour as in bounty's place the sword

56

That which souls desire is too small a thing for them to fight
 about and perish by each other's hands,
 Howbeit a true man will face grim Fate ere he suffer con-
 tumely

If the life of aught that lives were lasting we should reckon
 the brave the most misguided of us
 But if there is no escape from death 'tis but weakness to be
 a coward
 All that the soul finds hard before it has come to pass is
 easy when it comes

57

Men from their kings alone their worth derive
 But Arabs ruled by aliens cannot thrive
 Boors without culture without noble fame
 Who know not loyalty and honour's name
 Go where thou wilt thou seest in every land
 Folk driven like cattle by a servile band

*RUDAKÍ

THE most famous bard of the Samánid epoch (tenth century)
 He is said to have been blind from birth

58

Rudakí the harp will play
 Gin ye the wine as he the lay
 Molten ruby or ruby wine
 None who sees it may divine
 Since Nature of one stuff did shape
 The solid gem the liquid grape
 Untouched it stains the fingers red
 Untasted flies into the head

*ABU ZURÁ A OF JURJÁN

A court minstrel who flourished under the Samanids

59

When silver they ask of me gold I fling
 The power of my song when they bid me sing
 Makes wax of stubborn steel
 When the wind's abroad with the wind I roam
 Now with cup and lute I leave my home
 Now armed from head to heel

*DAKÍKÍ

DIED in A.D. 975 He began the *Sháhnáma*, the Persian national epic, which was completed by Firdausí.

60

O would that in the world there were no night,
 That I might ne'er be parted from her lips¹
 No scorpion-sting would sink deep in my heart
 But for her scorpion coils of darkest hair
 If 'neath her lip no starry dimple shone,
 I would not linger with the stars till day;
 And if she were not cast in beauty's mould,
 My soul would not be moulded of her love
 If I must live without my Well-belov'd,
 O God! I would there were no life for me

*KISÁ'Í OF MERV

DIED about A.D. 990.

61

Unclose thine eyes and deeply Shining amidst the grass-blades, Even as a shamefaced lover, Draws to his face the mantle	gaze on the saffron-flower ¹ a very pearl in sheen, to hide his blushing cheeks, in folds of satin green.
The wine thro' darting sunbeams But oh, when falls reflected The blue glass and red vintage Are violet, you'd fancy,	how sweet and fair to see! therein the radiant shower, and golden-yellow rays and poppy and saffron-flower
So bright 'tis, when it trickles You'd say from pearls is trickling So clear 'tis, when you pour it Nor palm from cup you ever	down from the goblet's mouth, cornelian red and fine, in the hollow of your palm, would know, nor cup from wine

¹ Meadow saffron or crocus

62

Roses are a gift of price
 Sent to us from Paradise
 More divine our nature grows
 In the Eden of the rose
 Roses why for silver sell?
 O rose merchant fairly tell
 What you buy instead of those
 That is costlier than the rose

*FIRDAUSÍ

THE charming tale of which the best part is translated in the following pages may have been composed by Firdausí in his youth and afterwards inserted by him in the *Sháhnama* for it has metrical peculiarities which distinguish it from the rest of the poem. Here Firdausí shows himself as great a master of the romantic style as elsewhere of the epic.

63

*The Tale of Bizhan and Manísha*¹

I

He donned a glistening robe of Rum
 And stuck in his tiar an eagle's plume
 They saddled Shabrang and he bade them bring
 His baldrick and knightly signet ring
 And leaped to the stirrup and drew not rein
 Thither he rode with might and main
 Deep thoughts of love his heart beguiled
 As he neared that forest wild
 How yearningly his way he bent
 Anigh the fair Manísha's tent
 And from the sun took shelter free
 Beneath a lofty cypress tree!
 The mead rang loud with harp and song
 As though to cheer his soul along

¹ Manísh was the daughter of Afrásyáb the King of Turán while her lover Bizhan son of Giv was an Iranian knight. The reader will recollect that Irán and Turán in the *Sháhnama* correspond to Greece and Troy in the *Iliad*.

Whenas the beauty in her bower
 Espied the warrior paladin,
 Whose cheeks star-bright were like the flower
 Of violet and jessamine,
 His breast aglow with Greek brocade,
 His head crowned with a golden tiar,
 Love swelled the bosom of the maid
 For him who burned in love-desire,
 And to her nurse she said, "Be thou
 My messenger 'Neath yonder tree
 Who is that handsome youth? Go now,
 I pray thee, nurse, go quick and see!
 Is he Siyáwush come anew
 To life, or child of elfin race?
 And ask how he came here, and who
 Hath ever brought him to this place?
 Say, 'Art thou man or sprite, that thus
 With raging fire of love for thee
 Thou kindlest all the hearts of us?
 The world's Doomsday it well might be.
 For in this meadow each springtide
 Have I kept holiday, and ne'er
 Year in, year out, have we espied
 Any but thee, O tall and fair!
 But whether man or elf benign
 Upon our greenwood feast thou stray,
 I never looked on face like thine
 What is thy name, and whence thy way?"

To Bízhan came the nurse and bowed
 With homage low and blessing loud
 She told him all Manízha said,
 His two cheeks bloomed like roses red
 "Sweet messenger, I am not the knight
 Siyáwush, nor am I a sprite
 Of faery pedigree,
 (Thus Bízhan joyously began)
 Hither I come from old Iran,
 The country of the free

Bizhan the son of Giv my name
 Full keen to fight the boar I came
 The cloven heads by the wayside fling
 And bear their tushes to the King
 But when I heard of revels here
 I sped not back the hope lay near
 Afrásiyab's daughter I may trace
 And win by happy fortune's grace
 If but in dream to see her face
 Now richly dight are the meadows green
 Gay as an idol house in Chin
 I'll give for thy good rede and care
 Gold crown a girdle earrings fine
 If thou wilt lead me to the fair
 And move her heart to love as mine

The nurse returned and whispered clear
 The secret in Manízha's ear
 Described his look and every limb
 Even as the Maker fashioned him
 Manízha sent this answer straight
 What was thy fancy is thy prize
 Come to me with a lover's gait
 And fill with light my soul and eyes!
 At sight of thee will roses reign
 O'er sunken vale and tented plain
 He heard and recked of naught beside
 The messenger became the guide

Forth from the cypress shade in haste—
 For parley 'twas no hour—
 He footed Belt of gold was laced
 About his cypress slender waist
 As entered he the bower
 Manízha clasped him to her breast
 Undid the royal zone and pressed
 To hear of road and toil and war
 Who came with thee to fight the boar?
 And why with such a form and face
 Why troublest thou to wield the mace?

With musk and rose-water his feet
 They laved, then hasted to set meat
 Viands of every sort they spread
 In plenty more and more, and redd
 A paradise of wine and song
 And cleared the tent of all its throng,
 Save handmaidens to wait on foot
 And music make with harp and lute
 Brocade of peacock's hue and pied
 With dinars like a leopard's hide
 Upon the floor was strewn,
 With ambergris and musk blown wide
 And gold and gems from side to side
 The gay pavilion shone
 Three days, three nights in pleasure passed,
 Old wine in crystal cups went round,
 Till Bízhan, overcome at last,
 Slept where he lay in drunken swoond

II

Manízha, when the time drew nigh
 For parting, fain would rest her eye
 On Bízhan When she saw him sad,
 She called her handmaidens and bade
 Them mingle in the wine's sweet draught
 A drug that steals the sense By craft
 They gave it him, and as he drank,
 His head inebriated sank
 Straight she prepared a palanquin,
 The sleeping youth was laid within
 On one side was a pleasure-seat,
 A couch on the other, all complete
 Of sandal-wood She sprinkled there
 Camphor and shed the rose-water
 Soon as they neared Turania's town
 She wrapped him in a hooded gown,
 And entered secretly at night
 The palace none but friends knew how
 'Made ready a chamber of delight,

And eager for his waking now
 Poured in his ear a medicine
 That quickly the dulled sense uncharms
 He woke and found the jessamine
 Sweet bosomed lady in his arms
 Afrásiyáb's palace! In duress
 And bowered with the fair princess

Bízhan in bitter rue implored
 Save me from Ahriman O Lord!
 For me alas tis all too clear
 Never will be escape from here
 But oh avenge me on Gurgín!
 Oh hearken to my curses fell!
 'Twas he that lured me to this teen
 Enchanting me with many a spell
 Be of brave cheer Manízha cried
 What is not come deem wind and vain
 To men all sorts of things betide
 The feast anon the fight again

Betwixt the spousal and the doom
 These lovers gan array a room
 For banqueting and glee
 From each alcove tripped into sight
 The damsels beautiful and bright
 As rose cheeked fays and all bedight
 With Chinese taffety
 Who played the harp and trilled the lay
 And sped the fleeting night and day
 So passed a while The doorkeeper
 Got news that mischief was astir
 But since a rash word raised on bruit
 Shakes down from sorrow's tree the fruit
 He searched the maze to find a track
 Looked deeply in and cast far back—
 Who is he? Of what race? What plan
 Or hope hath led him to Turan? —
 And so discovered all and pale
 For his own life if he should fail

To speak out, from his post took wing
 And went before Turania's king,
 And said, "Thy daughter hath a man,
 A lover chosen from Iran "
 The monarch cried to God, his form
 Trembled as willow in the storm,
 Then from his eyelashes he strook
 The tears of blood and raging spoke.
 "Whoso in bower doth daughter hold,
 Ill-starred is he, tho' crowned with gold "

III

Afrásíyáb bade Garsíwaz there
 Dark dungeon, heavy chains, prepare
 "Go chain his hands to Roman gyve
 Arched like a bridge, and see thou drive
 The massive bolts right in each limb
 Make fast from head to foot of him,
 Then cast him headlong in the pit
 That ne'er by sun or moon is lit
 Take elephants, get hither drawn
 The boulder of the fiend Akwán,
 Which plucked from ocean deeps was hurled
 Upon the borders of the world
 Amidst a wood of Chín, to block
 The pit Arzhang Let that huge rock
 Seal Bízhan's prison till he deranged
 With anguish be, and I revenged!
 Thence to Manízha fly apace,
 The wanton who hath shamed her race
 Go with thy knights and sack her hall,
 Strip her of wealth and crown and all!
 Say, 'O accursed and reviled,
 Unworthy of the throne and tiar,
 Thou hast the diadem defiled,
 Brought low the proud head of thy sire '
 Ay, drag her naked to the abyss,
 And bid her on her prince look well
 And share his tears, whom he would kiss,
 And do him service in his cell.

Better to fight and die with fame
Than live to see this day of shame
The monarch's ruthless will upon
Bizhan the son of Giv was done
They haled him from the gallows bound
And bore him to the pit and round
His waist a Roman gyve they cast
Where to his hands they fettered fast
While smiths with steel hammers swung free
Drove deep the heavy bolts So he
Headlong into the pit was thrown
And o'er its mouth they set the stone
'Thence to Manízha's palace spurred
Garsíwaz and his cavaliers
Whenas of them the princess heard
Her face was hidden by her tears
He gave her treasures to loot
Purses and crowns bestowed and bore
Left her bare headed and bare foot
And with a single wrap no more
He sped her to the pit her eyes
Shed blood her cheeks were fresh as spring
Here is thy house and home he cries
Wait on this bondsman of the king!
When fierce Garsíwaz rode away
Manízha was to sorrow wed
Far o'er the desert she did stray
Until a day and night had fled
Then sobbing loud came nigh the prison
And made a passage for one hand
And ever when the sun was risen
The livelong day she roamed the land
And gathered food and let it down
To Bizhan through the crevice small
Weeping the while with many a moan
Thus wretchedly she lived in thrall

IV

By looking into a magic cup, Kai Khusrau, the Sháh of Írán, discovers what has befallen Bizhan and sends Rustam, disguised as a merchant, to rescue him from captivity

At tidings of the caravan,
 Bare-headed to the city ran
 Manizha, weeping sore
 To Rustam flew the fair princess,
 And wiping from her eyelashes
 With sleeve the tears, 'gan hail and bless
 And piteously implore
 "Hast joy of health and wealth?" said she,
 "Thy labour mayst thou never rue!
 High Heaven grant thy wish to thee,
 No evil eye a mischief do!
 With heart of hope sith thou hast tied
 Thy girdle, may thy gain increase!
 May wisdom ever be thy guide,
 Iran live happy and at peace!
 What news of the Sháh's knights hast thou
 Gív, Gúdarz, and the Iranian arms?
 Of Bizhan hear they not by now?
 Bring they no aid against his harms?
 Will they not come, his noble sires,
 To save the youth of Gúdarz' race?
 Will they not break the iron tires
 That hold him in a fell embrace?
 His feet in heavy chains are wound,
 His hands with the smiths' rivets sore
 Poor soul! in fetters dragged, fast-bound,
 And all his raiment stained with gore!
 For me, I roam in restless fears,
 His wailings fill mine eyes with tears "

Bold Rustam at her words took fright,
 Fain would he chase her from his sight
 "Begone!" he bawled, "thou speak'st in vain
 Of Khusrau and the youthful thane

Nor Giv nor Gudarz do I know
 Thy chatter hath made me foolish Go!
 Manízha looked on him and dewed
 Her bosom with tears that gushed in streams
 She said O master wise and good
 Not thee such ruthless speech beseems
 Tell naught but chase me not from thee
 For oh with pain my heart is torn
'Tis custom in Iran maybe
 To give no news to them that mourn
 What ails thee woman? Rustam said
 Sure Ahriman hath turned thy head
 My trafficking thou mad st me leave
 Therefore I scolded thee But grieve
 No more for words of hasty fret
 My thoughts upon my trade were set
 And further thou must understand
 I dwell not in Kai Khusrau s land
 Gudarz and Giv I know not in
 Those marches I have never been
 What food was there he bade them lay
 Before the beggar maid straightway
 Then questions one by one put he
 As Why is fortune dark with thee?
 Iran why ask of and why scan
 The road that leadeth to Iran?
 What need to ask me how I fare
 Of all my woe and all my care?
 From yon pit s mouth O noble man
 Grief laden unto thee I ran
 To ask of thee the news I crave
 Of Gudarz and of Giv the brave
 And thou at me didst warlike bawl—
 Ah fear st thou not the Judge of all?
 Afrásiyáb s daughter I am she
 Manízha! Ne er the sun might see
 Me bare who now with bloodshot eyes
 And teenful heart and cheeks how wan
 Gathering bread in beggar s guise
 From door to door must wander on

'This is God's doom on me I fell
 For Bízhan's sake from tiar and throne.
 Can fortune be more miserable
 Than this? God end it for me soon!
 And Bízhan in the pit profound
 Nor sun nor moon nor night nor day
 Beholds, where riveted and bound
 He prayeth God for death alway.
 Hence griefs on griefs still o'er me rise,
 Hence flow these waters from mine eyes
 Now, if thy way Iran-ward turn,
 Of Gúdarz haply thou wilt learn,
 Or peradventure Gív behold
 At Khusrau's gate, or Rustam hold
 Say, 'Bízhan is in dungeon fast,
 And if thou lag, his day is past
 Wouldst thou him see, to horse, to heel!
 Above him stone, below him steel'"
 Rustam replied, "These tears of love
 Why rainest thou? Nay, why not move
 Thy noble well-wishers to sue,
 Lady, for thee before thy sire?
 Perchance he will pity thee anew
 His blood may stir, his heart take fire
 Had not I stood of him in fear,
 I would have given thee countless gear"
 Then to the cooks "Go, bring with speed
 Viands according to her need"
 A fowl hot from the spit fetched they,
 He wrapped it in soft bread himself,
 And hid therein his ring away
 With hand as nimble as an elf
 "This to the dungeon take, O guide
 Of them that have no help beside!"

v

Back to the pit's mouth sped in haste
 Manízha, clasping to her breast
 The viands in a kerchief wound
 And gave to Bízhan all Astound

He gazed and forth from the abyss
 Called to the sun cheeked damozel
 Whence O belovèd gott st thou this
 That thy return is sped so well?
 What toil and hardship hast thou borne
 Kind heart to succour me forlorn!
 Manizha said A caravan
 Is come with goodly merchandise
 'Tis a rich trader from Iran
 With jewels every sort and size—
 A noble wise and glorious man
 A man of wealth and open heart
 Before his house he holds a mart—
 He gave me this and bade me pray
 To God for him and said Away!
 Go to the prisoner in his den
 If more he need come thou again

Bizhan amidst his fears grew bold
 With hope as he the bread unrolled
 He ate and turning from his meal
 Espied the hidden ring The seal
 He looked on read the name intent
 And laughed in joy and wonderment
 A turquoise seal it was and there
 Stood Rustam graven fine as hair!
 He saw the pledge of friendship true
 The key of sorrow's lock he knew
 And laughed with such a royal shout
 The rising echoes rang without
 Manizha when she heard the peal
 From dungeon dark and chains of steel
 marvelled and uttered this sooth rede
 The mad will laugh at their own deed
 Then spoke amazed the princess mild
 Good youth what means this laughter wild?
 How ope thy lips to laugh when light
 To thee is dark and day is night?
 Tell all with me the secret share!
 Hath Fortune shown a face more fair?

Her answered Bízhan, "Hope have I
 This hard coil Fortune will untie
 Now, if with me thou wilt keep troth
 And make a covenant on oath,
 I'll tell thee all A woman's tongue,
 Tho' sewed her lips, will out ere long "
 Manízha bitterly did moan
 "What curse is fallen on me?" she cries
 "Alas, for I am left alone
 With bleeding heart and weeping eyes
 Doth Bízhan think of me so ill,
 Who gave my heart and home and all,
 To run in rags o'er plain and hill,
 An outcast from my father's hall?
 I gave to plunder gems and tiars
 And wealth and treasure, all for him
 He was my hope my hope expires,
 My world is dark, mine eyes are dim
 His secret he would hide from me!
 Thou know'st me better, Lord, than he "
 "'Tis true," said Bízhan "For my sake
 Thou hast lost every thing but life
 Now must I tell and counsel take
 With thee, my wise and loving wife
 Rede me in all, 'tis meet and fit
 My woe hath emptied me of wit
 Know that this jewel-merchant man
 Whose cook to thee gave the sweet food,
 'Tis my cause brings him to Turan,
 Else jewels were to him no good
 God hath had ruth on me Maybe,
 The earth's broad face I yet shall see
 Me will this man from long-drawn bane,
 Thee from hot haste and melting pain
 Deliver Go, say in his ear,
 'O Persia's kingly cavalier,
 Soft heart to help, strong arm to guide,
 Dost thou on Rakhsh to battle ride?'"

Fleet as the wind, Manízha sped
 To Rustam, and the message said;

Who when he heard the damsel speak
 That far had come his aid to seek
 Knew Bízhan had laid the secret bare
 To the rose cheeked lady cypress fair
 O beauteous countenance! cried he
 May God ne er part thy love and thee!
 Say Yes the Power that heard in heaven
 Thy call for aid to thee hath given
 The lord of Rakhsh A weary road
 From Zábúl to Iran he trod
 For thee and thence came travel worn
 To Tur Ah wretched as thou art
 What sorrow must thou not have borne
 This many a day within thine heart!
 Go tell him this and secret keep
 Listen at night for my proclaim
 Cull faggots in the forest deep
 At nightfall rouse a beacon flame!

Manízha blithe and freed from care
 Ran to the mountain dungeon where
 Her woeful lover lay
 I gave the message she began
 To that renowned and blessed man
 And this he bade me say
 Yea I am he tis sooth I speak
 Whose name the son of Gív doth seek
 O thou that runn st with heart wound sore
 Thy fair cheeks bathed in tears and gore
 Tell him my loins and hands are scarred
 For his sake as a spotted pard
 Now since of him we sure are made
 Soon shall he see my killing blade
 Now in my grasp rent earth shall groan
 And high be hurled that sunken stone
 He bade me when the sky grows dun
 And night slips from the leash of sun
 Kindle a beacon fire that night
 Round the pit s head may be as bright

As day 'I by its blaze (he said)
Will find the way and boldly tread '"

When Bízhan deep in murky den
This message heard, he joyed, and then
To God he lifted up his face
"O holy Giver of all grace
Who succourest me in every woe,
O God, pierce to the heart my foe!
Right me on him that did the wrong,
Thou know'st my grief and pain how long
Again may I my country find
And leave this baleful star behind!
But thou who gavest, O my bride,
For me thy body and soul and heart,
Who, by such bitter sorrow tried,
Thought'st all a joy that eased my smart,
Lett'st girdle, throne, and tiar go
And kindred's love and parent's ruth
If from this Dragon's claws I know
Deliverance in my time of youth,
Oh, like a godly worshipper
I'll run to thee with arms flung wide,
And gird my loins to make thee fair
Return, as slaves a king beside
Bear now this further toil 'twill bring
Thee wealth and many a precious thing "

Manízha flitted at his word
Into the forest like a bird
She filled her arms with wood, her eyes
Still watched the sun for night to rise
Whenas the sun was seen no more
And dark night marched the mountains o'er,
What hour the world takes rest entire
And all is dim where all was bright,
Manízha set ablaze a fire
That scorched the eye of pitchy night,
While sounded in her ear the drum
Which told that brass-hoofed Rakhsh was come

• UNŞURÍ

LAUREATE of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna He died about the middle of the eleventh century

64

A scene like Paradise! 'Tis not Farkhár¹
 Yet all the splendour of Farkhár is there
 Kisses of loyal kings imprint the earth
 Faces of fair youths fill with light the air
 Then look how gold and silver Pleiades
 Bestud the rolling sky of scimitars
 And how like dagger's pearl encrusted haft
 Each baldric shows its blazonry of stars!
 Mark yonder troop belted with golden swords,
 Whereon pomegranate red you may behold
 Rubies like tears of blood distilled in pain
 From lover's eyes o'er cheeks as pale as gold
 On the ranked elephants their golden harness
 Glitters like saffron flowers on some hillside
 Serpents their trunks might seem in such a coat
 Of golden scales the serpent's self doth glide
 Darkful as thunderclouds with dagger tusks
 Their mountain forms move wind-like o'er the plain
 What place is this? The battle-field in sooth
 Of the world's Emperor and Suzerain!

*MASRÚR IBN MUHAMMAD OF TÁLAKÁN

THE following passage occurs in a panegyric addressed to Ahmad ibn Hasan al Maimandí the Vizier of Sultan Mahmud

65

When from the night's dark rising	a little space had past
That beauty springlike joyous	into the garden came—
Her loveliness so tender	peris would worship it
Before her jewelled splendour	idols would kiss the earth
The treasurer of Glory	she robbed of his guarded grace
From the fair maids of Khoten	she bore the palm away—
And whispering softly softly	spake to me Why said she

¹ A city in Turkistán famous for the beauty of its inhabitants

“Why art thou fain to leave me? What is this purpose fell?
 Ah, stay, for here beside me spring reigns in autumn’s stead,
 My cheeks are damask roses, my chin a white lily
 And rest thine eye on the wine-cup, then wilt thou praise no more
 The tulip’s rain-washed petals, the dew-bright jessamine ”

‘ABÚ SA‘ÍD IBN ABI ‘L-KHAIR

THE great Persian mystic (A.D. 967-1049), to whom many quatrains are attributed. See Professor Browne’s *Literary History of Persia*, vol. II, pp. 261-269 and my *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, pp. 1-76

66

He was asked, “When shall a man be freed from his wants?” “When God shall free him,” he replied, “this is not effected by a man’s exertion, but by the grace and help of God. First of all, He brings forth in him the desire to attain this goal. Then He opens to him the gate of repentance. Then He throws him into self-mortification, so that he continues to strive and, for a while, to pride himself upon his efforts, thinking that he is advancing or achieving something, but afterwards he falls into despair and feels no joy. Then he knows that his work is not pure, but tainted, he repents of the acts of devotion which he had thought to be his own, and perceives that they were done by God’s grace and help, and that he was guilty of polytheism in attributing them to his own exertion. When this becomes manifest, a feeling of joy enters his heart. Then God opens to him the gate of certainty, so that for a time he takes anything from any one and accepts contumely and endures abasement, and knows for certain by Whom it is brought to pass, and doubt concerning this is removed from his heart. Then God opens to him the gate of love, and here too egoism shows itself for a time and he is exposed to blame, which means that in his love of God he meets fearlessly whatever may befall him and reckons not of reproach, but still he thinks ‘I love’ and finds no rest until he perceives that it is God who loves him and keeps him in the state of loving, and that this is the result of divine love and grace, not of his own endeavour. Then

God opens to him the gate of unity and causes him to know that all action depends on God Almighty. Hereupon he perceives that all is He and all is by Him and all is His that He has laid this self conceit upon His creatures in order to prove them and that He in His omnipotence ordains that they shall hold this false belief because omnipotence is His attribute so that when they regard His attributes they shall know that He is the Lord. What formerly was hearsay now becomes known to him intuitively as he contemplates the works of God. Then he entirely recognises that he has not the right to say I or mine. At this stage he beholds his helplessness desires fall away from him and he becomes free and calm. He wishes that which God wishes his own wishes are gone he is emancipated from his wants and has gained peace and joy in both worlds. First action is necessary then knowledge in order that thou mayst know that thou knowest naught and art no one. This is not easy to know. It is a thing that cannot be rightly learned by instruction nor sewed on with needle nor tied on with thread. It is the gift of God.

67

The heart's vision is what matters not the tongue's speech. Thou wilt never escape from thy self until thou slay it. To say There is no god but Allah is not enough. Most of those who make the verbal profession of faith are polytheists at heart and polytheism is the one unpardonable sin. Thy whole body is full of doubt and polytheism. Thou must cast them out in order to be at peace. Until thou deny thy self thou wilt never believe in God. Thy self which is keeping thee far from God and saying So and so has treated thee ill such and such a one has done well by thee points the way to creatureliness and all this is polytheism. Nothing depends on the creatures all depends on the Creator. This thou must know and say and having said it thou must stand firm. To stand firm means that when thou hast said One thou must never again say Two. Creator and creature are Two. Do not double like a fox that ye may suddenly start up in some other place that is not right

faith Say "Allah!" and stand firm there Standing firm is this, that when thou hast said "God" thou shouldst no more speak or think of created things, so that it is just as though they were not Love that One who does not cease to be when thou ceasest, in order that thou mayst be such a being that thou never wilt cease to be!

68

Four thousand years before God created these bodies, He created the souls and kept them beside Himself and shed a light upon them He knew what quantity of light each soul received and He was showing favour to each in proportion to its illumination The souls remained all that time in the light until they became fully nourished Those who in this world live in joy and agreement with one another must have been akin to one another in yonder place Here they love one another and are called the friends of God, and they are brethren who love one another for God's sake These souls know each other by the smell, like horses Though one be in the East and the other in the West, yet they feel joy and comfort in each other's talk, and one who lives in a later generation than the other is instructed and consoled by the words of his friend

69

O Thou in whose bat well-curved my heart like a ball is laid,
Nor ever a hairbreadth swerved from Thy bidding nor disobeyed,
I have washed mine outward clean, the water I drew and poured,
Mine inward is Thy demesne do Thou keep it stainless,
Lord!

70

In my heart Thou dwellest else with blood I'll drench it,
In mine eye Thou glowest else with tears I'll quench it
Only to be one with Thee my soul desireth,
Else from out my body, by hook or crook, I'll wrench it!

71

Cheer one sad heart thy loving deed will be
 More than a thousand temples raised by thee
 One freeman whom thy kindness hath enslaved
 Outweighs by far a thousand slaves set free

72

Not until every mosque beneath the sun
 Lies ruined, will our holy work be done
 And never will true Musalmán appear
 Till faith and infidelity are one

*BĀBĀ KUHĪ OF SHĪRĀZ

DIED in A.D. 1050. He was a dervish contemporary with Abu Sa'īd ibn Abī l-Khair and his *Divān* preserved in the British Museum is the oldest collection of mystical odes in Persian that has come down to us

73

In the market in the cloister—only God I saw
 In the valley and on the mountain—only God I saw
 Him I have seen beside me oft in tribulation
 In favour and in fortune—only God I saw
 In prayer and fasting in praise and contemplation
 In the religion of the Prophet—only God I saw
 Neither soul nor body accident nor substance
 Qualities nor causes—only God I saw
 I oped mine eyes and by the light of His face around me
 In all the eye discovered—only God I saw
 Like a candle I was melting in his fire
 Amidst the flames outflashing—only God I saw
 Myself with mine own eyes I saw most clearly
 But when I looked with God's eyes—only God I saw
 I passed away into nothingness I vanished
 And lo I was the All living—only God I saw

ABU 'L-'ALÁ AL-MA'ARRÍ

ABU 'L-'ALÁ, the famous pessimist, ascetic, and freethinker, was born at Ma'arra near Aleppo in A D 973. An early attack of small-pox left him almost blind, but his extraordinary powers of memory compensated him for the loss of his sight and enabled him to acquire a great reputation, not only as a philologist but as a man of letters and general culture. His visit to Baghdád (A D 1008-9) marks the turning-point in his life. The hopes which drew him thither soon faded, and he came back to his native town, where the last fifty years of his long life were spent in seclusion. During this period he composed, besides a large number of prose writings, the work which has made him better known in Europe than any other Arabic poet—the *Luzúmu má lá yalzám*. These poems both in form and matter bear the stamp of a singular personality. The author dare not always say what he means, but he says enough to show that in his view not authority and tradition, but reason and conscience, must decide whether actions are right or wrong, and whether beliefs are false or true. He applies a rationalistic standard to all revealed religions, not excepting Islam. Those who desire further information may refer to an essay entitled "The Meditations of Ma'arri" in my *Studies in Islamic Poetry*, pp. 43-207, from which the following versions have been selected.

74

(Metre *Tawil*, with variations)

Would that a lad had died in the very hour of birth
 And never sucked, as she lay in childbed, his mother's breast!
 Her babe, it says to her or ever its tongue can speak,
 "Nothing thou gett'st of me but sorrow and bitter pain."

75

(Metre *Tawil*, with variations)

'Tis God's will a man should live in torment and tribulation,
 Until those that know him cry, "He hath paid now the
 lifelong debt."

Give joy to his next of kin on the day of his departure,
 For they gain a heritage of riches, and he of peace

76

Perish this world! I should not joy to be
 Its Caliph or Mahmud¹
 My fate I know not save that I in turn
 Am treading the same path to the same bourne
 As old Ád and Thamud
 The mountains (tis averred) shall melt the seas
 Surely shall freeze
 And the great dome of Heaven whose poles
 Have ever awed men's souls
 Some argue for its ruin some maintain
 Its immortality—in vain?
 The scattered boulders of the lava waste
 Shall ere they mingle into one massed ore?
 If sheer catastrophe shall fling in haste
 The Pleiad luminaries asunder
 Well may be quenched the fiery brand of Mars
 And if decay smites Indian scimitars
 Survival of their sheaths would be a wonder²!

77

In the casket of the Hours
 Events deep hid
 Wait on their guardian Powers
 To raise the lid
 And the Maker infinite
 Whose poem is Time
 He need not weave in it
 A forced stale rhyme
 The Nights pass so
 Voices dumb
 Without sense quick or slow
 Of what shall come

* * *

Sultan Mahmūd of Ghazna died in A.D. 1030 twenty eight years before the death of Ma arrí

² Extinct aboriginal tribes the legend of their destruction is told in the Koran

The scimitars represent the stars and planets which are sheathed by the celestial spheres

By Allah's will preserving
 From misflight,
 The barbs of Time unswerving
 On us alight.

A loan is all he gives
 And takes again,
 With his gift happy lives
 The folly of men

78

(Metre *Wáfir*)

Aweary am I of living in town and village
 And oh, to be camped alone in a desert region,
 Revived by the scent of lavender when I hunger
 And scooping into my palm, if I thirst, well-water!
 Meseemeth, the Days are dromedaries lean and jaded
 That bear on their backs humanity travelling onward,
 They shrink not in dread from any portentous nightmare,
 Nor quail at the noise of shouting and rush of panic,
 But journey along for ever with those they carry,
 Until at the last they kneel by the dug-out houses
 No need, when in earth the maid rests covered over,
 No need for her locks of hair to be loosed and plaited,
 The young man parts from her, and his tears are flowing
 Even thus do the favours flow of disgustful Fortune

79

They robbed the Christian's daughter,
 From high embowered room
 In dusky robe they brought her
 Down, down into a tomb
 And oh, her dress had often been
 Gay as a peacock's plume

80

(Metre *Tawíl*)

The sage looketh in the glass of Reason, but he that makes
 His brethren his looking-glass will see truth, mayhap, or lies
 And I, shall I fear the pain of Allah, when He is just,

And though I have lived the life of one wronged and racked
with pain?

Yes each hath his portioned lot but men in their ignorance
Would mend here the things they loathe that never can
mended be

81

Life seems the vision of one sleeping
Which contraries interpret after
Tis joy whenever thou art weeping
Thy smiles are tears and sobs thy laughter
And Man exulting in his breath
A prisoner kept in chains for death

82

(Metre *Tawfl*)

Shall ever the dead man's soul return after he is gone
To render his kin the meed of thanks for their flowing tears?
The hearse bearers' necks and hands conveyed him—a change
of state

From when to and fro he fared in palanquins all of gold
And liefer had he alive been trodden below their feet
Than high they had lifted up his corpse on their shoulders
borne

O levelling Death! to thee a rich man is like a poor
Thou canst not that one hath hit the right way another missed
The knight's coat of mail thou deemst in softness a maiden's
shift

And frail as the spider's house the domed halls of Chosroes
To earth came he down unhorsed when Death in the saddle
sate

Thou aye mongst his clan was he the noblest of them that ride
A bier is but like a ship it casteth its wrecked away
To drown in a sea of death where wave ever mounts on wave

83

The holy fights by Moslem heroes fought
The saintly works by Christian hermits wrought
And those of Jewry or of Sabian creed—
Their valour reaches not the Indian's deed

Whom zeal and awe religiously inspire
 To cast his body on the flaming pyre
 Yet is man's death a long, long sleep of lead
 And all his life a waking O'er our dead
 The prayers are chanted, hopeless farewells ta'en,
 And there we lie, never to stir again
 Shall I so fear in mother earth to rest?
 How soft a cradle is thy mother's breast!
 When once the viewless spirit from me is gone,
 By rains unfreshened let my bones rot on!

(Metre *Tawil*)

84

He gave to himself the name of Joy fool and liar he!
 May earth stop his mouth! In Time is anything joyful?
 Yes one part of good is there in many a thousand parts,
 And when we have found it, those that follow are evil
 Our riches and poverty, precaution and heedlessness,
 And glory and shame 'tis all a cheat and illusion
 Encompassed are we by Space, which cannot remove from us,
 And Time, which doth ever pass away with his people.
 So charge, as thou wilt, the foe, or skulk on the battle-field
 The Nights charge at thee and wheel again to the onset.

85

Ah, let us go, whom nature joined of old in friendship fast,
 To meet the Fates pursuing us, that we may die at last
 The draught of Life, to me it seems the bitterest thing to
 drain,
 And lo, in bitter sooth we all must spew it out again

(Metre *Tawil*)

86

Who knows? Some that fill the mosque with terror whene'er
 they preach
 No better may be than some that drink to a tavern-tune
 If God's public worship serve them only to engine fraud,
 Then nearer to Him are those forsaking it purposely

Let none vaunt himself who soon returns to an element
 Of clay which the potter takes and cunningly moulds for use
 A vessel if so it hap anon will be made of him
 From whence any common churl at pleasure may eat and
 drink
 And he unaware the while transported from land to land—
 O sorrow for him! his bones have crumbled, he wanders on

87

The world's abounding filth is shot
 O'er all its creatures all its kinds
 The evil taint even she hath got
 Whose loom for her a living finds
 Be just and live on earth what can?
 And none is more unjust than Man

88

(Metre *Tawil*)

To neighbour with men meseems a sickness perpetual
 I wished when it wore me thin for fever that comes and goes
 By effort and self constraint they compassed a little good
 Whatever they wrought of ill 'twas nature that prompted it
 Oh where are the gushing streams and oceans of bounty now?
 Are those of the lion's brood that Time spared hyenas all?
 Their wood in the burning yields a perfume of frankincense
 But tried on the teeth of sore necessity, proves flint hard

89

Thou art diseased in understanding and religion Come to
 me that thou mayst hear the tidings of sound truth
 Do not unjustly eat what the water has given up and do not
 desire as food the flesh of slaughtered animals
 Or the white (milk) of mothers who intended its pure draught
 for their young not for noble ladies
 And do not grieve the unsuspecting birds by taking their
 eggs for injustice is the worst of crimes
 And spare the honey which the bees get betimes by their
 industry from the flowers of fragrant plants

For they did not store it that it might belong to others, nor
 did they gather it for bounty and gifts
 I washed my hands of all this, and would that I had perceived
 my way ere my temples grew hoar¹

90

Think about things! Thought clears away some part of
 ignorance Were skilled
 The nesting bird to see the end, it ne'er would have begun
 to build
 The Indians, who cremate their dead and never visit them
 again,
 Win peace from straitness of the grave and ordeal by the
 angels twain¹
 To male and female in the world the path of right is preached
 in vain

91

(Metre *Tawil*)

What! seest thou not that vice in man's nature is inborn,
 But virtue a new unheired possession which minds acquire?
 My heart hath been wrung to watch some morning a savage
 boor
 Belabouring his ass with blows he takes on his head a sin
 The tired beast beyond its strength he burdens, and if it flag,
 He sets on it with his lash, whilst stubbornly it endures
 Until it grows like unto a whoremonger, one unwed,
 On whom falls the penalty of scourging, and not by halves²
 Weals rise on its back and flanks, the visible marks of woe;
 Oh, pardon a helpless brute too feeble to plod along!
 A Maker have we the mind, undoubting, confesses Him
 Eternal then what avails this birth of a latter day?

¹ According to orthodox belief, when the dead man is laid in the grave he is examined by two angels, named Munkar and Nakir, hence Moham-medans take care to have their graves made hollow, that they may sit up with more ease during the inquisition

² An unmarried man who commits adultery is punished by the infliction of one hundred stripes, if he be free, but if he be a slave, the number of stripes is reduced by half

And grant that you rub and rub the fire stick of Right in vain
Still less from those sticks of Wrong can ever you coax a spark
It gladdens me not that I inflict on a fellow man
Injustice, and live in ease and opulence all the while

92

Allah disposes Be a hermit then
And mix not with the divers sorts of men
I know but this that him I hold in error
Who helps to propagate Time's woe and terror

93

Humanity in whom the best
Of this world's features are expressed—
The chiefs set over them to reign
Are but as moons that wax and wane

If ye unto your sons would prove
By act how dearly them ye love
Then every voice of wisdom joins
To bid you leave them in your loins

94

I swear my body will cease not ever to be in pain
Until it come to its element eterne again
And thither when I go back my bones that once were strong
To earth will crumble during endless ages long

95

Metre (*Tawil*)

And men see the last of me the day when shall o'er me close
The deep well of Death whose sides are lined with the hateful
stones
Does any one going hence expect robes of green beyond
When these dusky shrouds within the earth have been torn
to shreds?
To me thereanent came news a medley of tangled tales
By ways that perplex and foil men eager to know the truth

Ay, short of it fell the Zoroastrian archimage,
 The bishop of Christian folk, the rabbin and scribe of Jews,
 And wrote legends of their own in volumes which long ago
 Have surely been lost, their ink and paper consumed away
 The sects disagreed about the happenings after death,
 And those are engulfing seas whereof none may reach the
 shore

'Twas said, "Human souls have power and freedom in what
 they do,"

And some answered, "Nay, 'tis plain they act by necessity "
 And oh, had our bodies been created of marble rock,
 They scarce had endured the shocks of ever recurring change

96

With optic glass go question thou the stars that roll o'erhead,
 The stars that take away the taste of honey gatherèd
 They point to death, no doubt, but not to rising from the dead

97

We laugh, but inept is our laughter,
 We should weep, and weep sore,
 Who are shattered like glass and thereafter
 Remoulded no more

98

Although your mouths hymn Allah One and Peerless,
 Your hearts and souls from that ye owe Him shrink
 I swear your Torah gives no light to lead us,
 If there 'tis found that wine is lawful drink.

* * * *

They all err Moslems, Christians, Jews, and Magians,
 Two make Humanity's universal sect
 One man intelligent without religion,
 And one religious without intellect

99

We hope for that world's bliss
 Although our deeds in this
 Are not so fair that we should hope Heaven's balconies
 Folk carry not from here
 The gauds of wealth and gear
 But laden with their sins depart and disappear
 Reason was dumb Ask then
 Said I the reverend men
 But naught could they decide this lay beyond their ken
 They talked and lied When pressed
 To put all to the test
 Of logic they broke down in impotence confessed

100

Falsehood hath so corrupted all the world
 Ne'er deal as true friends they whom sects divide
 But were not hate Man's natural element
 Churches and mosques had risen side by side

101

(Metre *Tawil*)

Oh cleave ye to Reason's path that rightly ye may be led
 Let none set his hopes except upon the Preserver!
 And quench not the Almighty's beams for lo He hath given
 to all
 A lamp of intelligence for use and enjoying
 I see humankind are lost in ignorance even those
 Of ripe age at random guess like boys playing *mora*

102

If knowledge aids not me nor baulks my foe
 The losers in Life's game are those who know
 As Allah laid our fortune so it lies
 For ever—O vain wisdom of the wise!

Can this doomed catiff man, tho' far he fly,
 'Scape from his Lord's dominion, earth and sky?
 Nay, soon shall we, the hindmost gang, tread o'er
 The path our fellow-slaves have trod before.
 Surveying humankind, I marvel still
 How one thirsts while another drinks his fill
 I draw my bow and every shaft flies wide,
 The arrow aimed at me ne'er turns aside

* * ~ ~ *

O fools, awake! The rites ye sacred hold
 Are but a cheat contrived by men of old,
 Who lusted after wealth and gained their lust
 And died in baseness and their law is dust

103

Stay at home! No obligation
 I account the Pilgrimage,
 Lady, on thy sex in virgin
 Youth nor yet in wedded age

Mecca's valley breeds the worst of
 Miscreants, who never feel
 Fierceness to defend the weaker,
 Never flame with knightly zeal.

Men of Shaiba, temple-guardians,
 Standing there bemused with wine,
 Shove the pilgrim-folk in couples
 Through the gateway of the Shrine

When the people throng around it,
 Leave to enter they refuse
 None that slips a piece of silver
 Christians jostle in with Jews

Lady, canst thou do a kindness?
 Bless, then, having power to bless,
 And if Charity invite thee
 To a good act, answer "Yes"!

104

(Metre *Tawíl*)

I see multitudes that hope the grace of their Lord to win
 By kissing a corner stone or wearing a crucifix
 But pardon me O my God! At Mecca shall I throw off
 Amongst pilgrims newly come the weeds of a widowed
 frame
 And go down to water pools along with some fine fellows
 From Yemen, who never cared to dig for themselves a well?

105

(Metre *Basít*)

Virtue is neither a fast consuming those who it keep,
 Nor any office of prayer nor rough fleece wrapped on the limbs
 'Tis nothing but to renounce and cast all evil away
 And sweep the breast clear and clean of malice envy and spite
 Whate'er the lion profess no true abstainer is he
 So long as wild beasts and tame fear lest their necks may be
 broke

106

Two fates still hold us fast
 A future and a past
 Two vessels vast embrace
 Surrounds us—Time and Space
 Whene'er we ask what end
 Our Maker did intend
 Some answering voice is heard
 That utters no plain word

107

If criminals are fated
 'Tis wrong to punish crime
 When God the ores created
 He knew that on a time
 They should become the sources
 Whence sword blades dripping blood
 Flash o'er the manes of horses
 Iron curbed iron shod

108

Feel shame in presence of the daily sun,
 The moon of night, and shining troops untold
 Of stars which in the sky their courses hold
 By Allah's leave, nor fails them breath to run

These have a nearer claim and right, I trow,
 To reverence than sons of noblest sire
 Glory to Him who made them! Shall their fire
 Sink in the dust of Time? I say not so

Nay, but I muse Are they endowed with mind
 Whereby they can distinguish foul from fair?
 Are feminine and masculine up there
 By birth related and in marriage joined?

* * * * *

I clean renounce the fool whose hidden track
 And open prove him still to error sworn,
 Who bans the prayer of afternoon with scorn
 And casts the prayer of noon behind his back

Give the poor man who comes to thee a dole,
 Scant though it be, nor frown away thy guest,
 But raise for him a flame of ruddy crest
 That frolics in the darkness like a foal!

109

'Tis said that spirits remove by transmigration
 From body into body, till they are purged,
 But disbelieve what error may have urged,
 Unless thy mind confirm the information

Tho' high their heads they carry, like the palm,
 Bodies are but as herbs that grow and fade
 Hard polishing wears out the Indian blade,
 Allay thy soul's desires and live calm

110

When the soul leaves
 This frame to which it cleaves
 Some say it after grieves

If with it go
 The Reason it may know
 And recollect past woe

Else, all the reams
 O'erwrit with dead men's dreams
 Are wasted ink meseems¹

111

Ye have gotten a long long shrift O kings and tyrants
 And still ye work injustice hour by hour
 What ails you that ye tread no path of glory?
 A man may take the field tho' he love the bower

But some hope an Imám with voice prophetic
 Will rise amidst the silent ranks agaze
 An idle thought! There's no Imam but Reason
 To point the morning and the evening ways

HARÍRÍ

HARÍRÍ of Basra (A.D. 1054-1122) wrote what is next to the Koran the most celebrated book in Arabic literature. It is a work of fiction but one in which the story counts for less than the style. Under the name of al Hárith son of Hammám Harírí relates the adventures of Abu Zaid a disreputable old rascal gifted with marvellous powers of improvisation and withal so genial humorous resourceful and entertaining that we cannot help admiring and even liking him. His character and accomplishments are exhibited in fifty *Makamas* which form not a continuous narrative but a series of episodes and are written throughout in rhymed prose and verse. I have translated the eleventh and

¹ The dead men's dreams (ravings in the original) refer to the descriptions of a future life which occur in the books of Revelation

twelfth *Makámas*—those called after Sáwa and Damascus—imitating their peculiar manner of composition as well as I can

112

The Makáma of Sáwa

Al-Hárith son of Hammám related.

Whilst sojourning in Sáwa, I felt my heart was stubborn, slow to melt, so I betook myself to what the Prophet said concerning the heart that is hard, how the cure for it is a visit to the graveyard. And when I arrived at the abode of the dead, of man's dust the common bed, I saw a gathering of people who never stirred beside a newly dug grave, and a corpse being interied, and I turned to join them, meditating on that that cometh at last, and remembering my kinsfolk who had passed. Now, when the grave was filled and the cries of grief were stilled, an old man rose from a mound, leaning on a staff and surveying those around. He had covered his face with his cloak and cunningly disguised his look, and he said, "*They that work, let them work for wages like this*¹. Gird yourselves, O ye remiss! Bethink yourselves, O ye that take no heed! Consider well, O ye that can mark and read! What ails you? Your peers are buried and your hearts ache not, the mould is poured in and ye quake not, ye reckon not of the sudden dooms, ye prepare not for going down into the tombs, though many an eye weeps, ye shed no tears, ye hear the tidings of death with careless ears, the loss of a familiar friend doth not cause you to quail, nor are ye moved when the assembled mourners wail. The bier is carried, and one of you walks behind, but his own house is ever before his mind. he sees his kinsman laid in the dark lair, and all the while he is thinking how he shall get his share, he leaves his comrade for worms to mar, then away he goes with his pipe and guitar. Bitterly have ye grieved if but a grain's weight were chipped from your hoard, yet the cutting off of your loved ones ye have ignored, and ye have been dismayed when ye yourselves fell into trouble, but have made light of it when your kindred were mown down like stubble. Ye have laughed

¹ Koran, xxxvii, 59

over him ye came to bury as ye laughed not in the hour
 of dancing and making merry and ye have strutted after
 hearses as ye strutted not on the day ye received a present
 of purses Ye have turned from the dirge of the keeners
 to furnish dinners and from the anguish of them that
 mourn their nearest to seek out the viands that are dearest
 It seems as if ye were joined to Death by a connexion of
 protection or as if from Time's career ye had naught
 to fear or as if ye were confident of your safety and sure
 that your peace with the Destroyer of delights would endure
 Nay 'tis an ill creed! Nay but ye will know it ye will
 indeed! Then he recited

Pretending sense in vain how long O scatterbrain wilt
 thou heap sin and bane and compass error's span?
 Thy conscious guilt avow! The white hairs on thy brow
 admonish thee and thou hast ears unstopt O man!
 Death's call dost thou not hear? Rings not his voice full
 clear? Of parting hast no fear to make thee sad and wise?
 How long sunk in a sea of sloth and vanity wilt thou play
 heedlessly as though Death spared his prize?
 Till when far wandering from virtue wilt thou cling to evil
 ways that bring together vice in brief?
 For thy Lord's anger shame thou hast none but let maim
 o'ertake thy cherished aim then feel'st thou burning
 grief
 Thou hail'st with eager joy the coin of yellow die but if a
 bier pass by feigned is thy sorry face
 Perverse and callous wight! thou scornest counsel right to
 follow the false light of treachery and disgrace
 Thy pleasure thou dost crave to sordid gain a slave for
 getting the dark grave and what remains of dole
 Were thy true weal descried thy lust would not misguide nor
 thou be terrified by words that should console
 Not tears blood shall thine eyes pour at the great Assize
 when thou hast no allies no kinsman thee to save
 Straiter thy tomb shall be than needle's cavity deep deep
 thy plunge I see as diver's neath the wave
 There shall thy limbs be laid a feast for worms arrayed till
 utterly decayed are wood and bones withal

Nor may thy soul repel that ordeal horrible, when o'er the
Bridge of Hell she must escape or fall

Astray shall leaders go, and mighty men be low, and sages
shall cry, 'Woe like this was never yet'

Then haste, my thoughtless friend, what thou hast marred to
mend, for life draws near its end, and still thou art in
the net

Trust not in fortune, nay, though she be soft and gay; for
she will spit one day her venom, if thou dote,

Abate thy haughty pride! lo, Death is at thy side, fastening,
whate'er betide, his fingers on thy throat

When prosperous, refrain from arrogant disdain, nor give
thy tongue the rein a modest tongue is best

Comfort the child of bale and listen to his tale repair thine
actions frail, and be for ever blest

Feather the nest once more of those whose little store hath
vanished ne'er deplore the loss nor miser be,

With meanness bravely cope, and teach thine hand to ope,
and spurn the misanthrope, and make thy bounty free

Lay up provision fair and leave what brings thee care for
sea the ship prepare and dread the rising storm

This, friend, is what I preach, expressed in lucid speech
Good luck to all and each who with my creed conform!"

Then he drew back his sleeve from a fore-arm of strong
compacture, on which he had tied the splints of fraud, not
of fracture, and set himself to beg audaciously and
rapaciously, and beguiled the company by means of that
false trimming until his 'sleeve was full and brimming,
when he descended from the mound, rejoicing in the
windfall he had found Said the narrator I plucked him
from behind by the hem of his mantle, and he inclined
toward me in humility, and greeted me with civility
And lo, it was our old man, Abú Zaid, with his very eyes
and lies, and I said to him

"How many an artful ruse, O Abú Zaid, wilt use, thy quarry
to bemuse? and reck'st thou not of blame?"

His wit flashed, and he answered unabashed

"Rail not, but understand! Seest thou in any land one that
will hold his hand when he can win the game?"

' Get thee gone said I "old fiend of the Fire with thy burden dire! There is nothing like thee for the fairness of thy seeming and the foulness of thy scheming but dung silver dight or a privy painted white So we parted, I to the right and he to the left and southward I set forth while he faced the north

113

The Makama of Damascus

Al Hárith son of Hammám related

I went from Irák to Damascus with its green water courses in the day when I had troops of fine bred horses and was the owner of coveted wealth and resources free to divert myself as I chose and flown with the pride of him whose fullness overflows When I reached the city after toil and teen on a camel travel lean I found it to be all that tongues recite and to contain soul's desire and eye's delight So I thanked my journey and entered Pleasure's tourney and began there to break the seals of appetites that cloy and cull the clusters of joy until a caravan for Irák was making ready— and by then my wild humour had become steady so that I remembered my home and was not consoled but pined for my fold— wherefore I struck the tents of absence and yearning and saddled the steed of returning

As soon as my companions were arrayed and the agreement duly made fear debarred us from setting on our way without an escort to guard us We sought one in every clan and tried a thousand devices to secure a man but he was nowhere to be found in the hive it seemed as though he were not amongst the live The travellers being at the end of their tether mustered at the Jairun gate to take counsel together and ceased not from tying and unbinding and twisting and unwinding until contrivance was exhausted and those lost hope who had never lost it

Now over against them stood a person of youthful mien garbed in a hermit's gaberdine in his hand he held a rosary while his eyes spake of vigil and ecstasy at us

he was peering, and had sharpened his ear to steal a hearing. When the party was about to scatter, he said to them, for now he had laid open their secret matter, "O people, let your cares be sloughed and your fears rebuffed, for I will safeguard you with that which will cast out dread from your breasts and show itself obedient to your behests." Said the narrator. We demanded of him that he should inform us concerning his gage, and offered him a greater fee than for an embassy, and he declared it was certain words rehearsed to him in a dream of the night, to serve him as a phylactery against the world's despite. Then began we to exchange the furtive glance and wink to one another and look askance. Recognising that we thought poorly of his tale and conceived it to be frail, he said, "Why will ye treat my solemn assurance as an idle toy and my pure gold as alloy? By God, I have traversed many an awesome region and plunged into deadly hazards legion, and it hath enabled me to do without the protection of a guide and to dispense with a quiver at my side. Furthermore, I will banish the suspicion that hath shaken you and remove the distrust that hath o'ertaken you by consorting with you in the desert lands and accompanying you across the Samáwa sands. If my promise prove true, then do ye make my fortune new, but if my lips forswear, then my skin ye may tear and spill my blood and not spare!"

We were inspired to give his vision credit and allow the truth to be as he said it, so we refrained from harrying him, and cast lots for carrying him, and at his bidding we cut the loops of delay and put aside fear of harm or stay. When the pack-saddles were tied and the hour of departure nighed, we begged him to dictate the words of the magic ritual, that we might make them a safeguard perpetual. He said, "Let each one of you repeat the Mother of the Koran¹ at the coming of eve and dawn, then let him say with a tongue of meekness and a voice of weakness, 'O God! O quickener of bodies mouldering

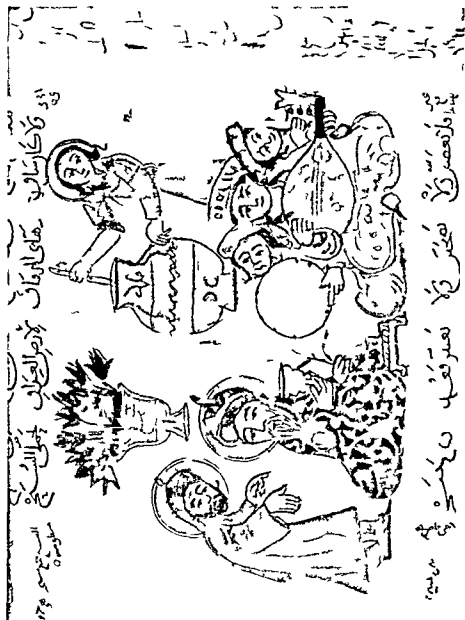
¹ "The Mother of the Koran" is a name given to the first chapter, because it contains the matter or fundamental doctrine of the whole book

in their site! O averter of blight! O Thou that shield
 est from affright! O Thou that dost graciously requite!
 O refuge of them that sue for favour in Thy sight! O
 Pardoner and Forgiver by right! Bless Mohammed the
 last of Thy prophets for ever, him that came Thy message
 to deliver! Bless the Lights of his family and the keys
 of his victory! And save me O God from the intrigues
 of the satanical and the assaults of the tyrannical from
 the vexation of the insolent and the molestation of the
 truculent from the oppression of transgressors and the
 transgression of oppressors from the foiling of the foilers
 and the spoiling of the spoilers from the perfidy of
 the perfidious and the insidiousness of the insidious!
 And O God protect me from the wrong doing of them that
 around me throng and from the thronging around me of
 them that do me wrong and keep me from the hands of
 the injurious and bring me out of the darkness of the
 iniquitous and in Thy mercy let me enter amongst Thy
 servants that are righteous! O God preserve me from
 dangers on my native soil and in the land of strangers
 when I roam and come home when I go in quest
 and return to rest in employment and enjoyment
 in occupation and vacation! And guard me in my
 self and my pelf in my fame and my aim in my
 weans and my means in my hold and my fold in
 my health and my wealth in my state and my fate!
 Let me not decline toward fortune's nadir or fall under
 the dominion of an invader but grant me from Thyself
 a power that shall be my aider! O God watch over me with
 Thine eye and Thine help from on high and distinguish
 me by Thy safeguarding and Thy bounteous rewarding
 and befriend me with Thy favour and Thy blessing alone
 and entrust me not to any care but Thine own! And
 bestow on me a happiness that decayeth not and allot
 to me a comfort that frayeth not and relieve me from
 the fears of indigence and shelter me with the coverlets
 of affluence and suffer not the talons of mine enemies to
 tear for Thou art He that hearkeneth to prayer

Then he looked down with an unroving eye and uttered

not a word in reply, so that we said, "An awe hath astounded him, or a faintness hath dumbfounded him" At last he raised his head and heaved his breath and said, "I swear by heaven with its starry train, and by the earth with its highways plain, and by the streaming rain, and by the blazing lamp of the Inane, and by the sounding main, and by the dust-whirling hurricane truly this is the most auspicious of charms and will stand you in better stead than the men-at-arms. he that cons it at the smiling of the dawn dreads no calamity ere evening's blush comes on, and he that murmurs it to the scouts of darkness as they advance is ensured for the night against any thievish chance"

Said the narrator So, for our part, we learned it till we knew it by heart, and we repeated it each man to his neighbour, lest we should forget it and lose our labour Then we marched, speeding the beasts along by prayers, not by the drivers' song, guarding bundle and bale by holy words, not by men in mail, and our friend, although his attention we never lacked, was not claiming the fulfilment of our pact, until, when the house-tops of 'Ána rose in the distance, he cried, "Now, your assistance! your assistance!" whereupon we brought to him of our goods both the concealed and the revealed, and the corded and the sealed, and said, "Take at thy choice, for thou wilt not find amongst us a dissentient voice" But all his delight was for the light and the fine, nothing pleased his eye but the coin 'twas a full load he shouldered and bore, enough to keep want from his door, then off he skipped as the cutpurse skips, and away he slipped as quicksilver slips We were distressed by his defaulting and amazed at his bolting, and we sought everywhere for a clue and inquired after him from false guides and true, till we heard that since foot in 'Ána he set he had never quitted the cabaret The foulness of this rumour egged me on to test the ore of its mine and meddle with what is not in my line Long before sunrise I repaired to the tavern in disguise, and lo, amidst jars and vats, there was the old varlet in a robe of scarlet, and around him



But be true to a friend, shun the miser and spend, ways of
charity wend, be unwearied in giving

He that knocks enters straight at the Merciful's gate, so
repent or e'er Fate call thee forth from the living!"

I said to him, "Bravo, bravo, for thy recitation, but fie
and shame on thy reprobation! By God, whence springeth
thy stock? methinks thy riddle is right hard to unlock"

He answered, "I do not wish to explicate but I will
indicate:

I am the age's rarity, the wonder of mankind,
I play my tricks amongst them all, and many a dupe I find;
But then I am a needy wretch whom Fortune broke and beat,
And father, too, of little ones laid bare as butcher's meat.
The poor man with a family none blames him if he cheat"

Said the narrator "Then I knew he was Abú Zaid, the
rogue of his race, he that blackens the face of hoariness
with disgrace, and I was shocked by the greatness of his
iniquity and the abomination of his obliquity "Old
man," I said, "is it not time that thou draw back from
thy course of crime?" He growled and scowled and
fumed, and pondered a moment and resumed, "'Tis a
night for exulting, not for insulting, and an occasion
for wine-quaffing, not for mutual scoffing. Away with
sorrow till we meet to-morrow!" So I parted from him,
in fear of a row, not because I relied on his vow, and I
passed my night in the weeds of contrition for having
gained admission to the daughter of the vine, not to a
mosque or a shrine And I promised God Almighty that
nevermore would I visit a drinking-shop, not though the
empire of Baghdád were given me as a sop, and never see
the vats of wine again, even if the season of youth might
be mine again

Then we saddled the camels tawny-white in dawn's
twilight, and left Abú Zaid in peace with his old tutor,
Iblís¹

¹ Satan

*IBNU 'L-BALKHÍ

THE following account of Chosroes Anusharwán who reigned in Persia A.D. 531-579 occurs in the *Fársnāma* a work on the geography of Fārs composed in the first decade of the twelfth century A.D. by a certain Ibnu l Balkhí and dedicated to the Seljuk prince Muhammad son of Maliksháh. The author who is otherwise unknown has prefixed to the geographical portion of his work a history of the ancient Persian kings. This is written in slightly archaic but excellent Persian and is well worth reading.

114

Kisrā Anusharwán the Just

When Kisrā Anusharwán the Just came to the throne he set before him (as a pattern) the testaments of Ardashír son of Bábak¹ and fulfilled the precepts contained therein. Wherever he found a book of moral philosophy or politics he used, after reading it to adopt and put in practice any part of it that pleased him. The principles which he established concerning the kingship, the maintenance of the army and the administration of justice were such as none of the Persian kings had ever equalled. The tale of his virtues and achievements is too long to relate and as there is a well known book on the subject we shall mention only a few of the most important. At the beginning he said: 'The empire depends on religion and until religious affairs are disposed of no attention can be given to any other affairs. The army must not be in doubt as to its religious belief. Accordingly he summoned his counsellors and in the presence of Buzurj mihr who was his Vizier addressed them thus: 'Know that this Mazdak is aiming at the sovereignty. My father did not perceive his designs. He is like unto Mání the heretic whom my ancestor Bahrám son of Hurmuz slew so that the world was no more troubled by him. Now it is needful to take measures against this man: what course think ye is the best? They all answered: 'We are thy slaves and this thought which thou hast formed is a proof that thy kingdom will endure. Anusharwán said: 'This man hath many followers and great power. He cannot be

¹ The founder of the Sásánian dynasty (A.D. 226-41)

destroyed save by guile, else this will be a long business for us. Now do ye keep the matter secret, that I may find a plan." Thereupon they arose, and Anúsharwán sent a message to Mazdak in these terms: "It is known to me that thou art in the right, and my father was wont to enjoin obedience to thee as a duty. Now it behoves thee to visit me according to thy custom and make known to me the true doctrine and deem that thy place in my favour is as high and firm as it can be." So Mazdak came, and Anúsharwán bestowed on him honours without bound and gave himself up to him in such wise that Mazdak fancied he had entrapped Anúsharwán, and for some time the king was so friendly with him that the people, being unaware of what lay beneath, spoke evil of Anúsharwán, while the missionaries and adherents of Mazdak everywhere raised their heads and carried on their propaganda openly. When Anúsharwán saw that the miscreant had become confident, he said to him one day, "I am disgusted with my retinue and servants and governors and lieutenants and I wish to appoint one of you in the place of each of them. Now write a list of all the notables and soldiers and men of ability and renown amongst thy followers in order that I may appoint every one to a high office and employment, and also a list of the military and civilian classes which are in thy allegiance, that I may confer a kindness and favour upon every man." Mazdak accordingly drew up two lists comprising more than 150,000 men, and then Anúsharwán said: "Mihriján (the autumn festival) is at hand. I desire thee to invite all the missionaries and chiefs and men of renown amongst thy followers, that I may celebrate this festival in their sight and appoint each one to his due office and employment." Mazdak wrote letters to his adherents, bidding them set out for Madá'in (Ctesiphon). Now Anúsharwán had resolved that on the day of Mihriján a great table should be spread, at which he would seat Mazdak and his followers, while he himself stood over Mazdak with a naked weapon in his hand, and that as soon as he killed Mazdak his soldiers should draw the swords concealed in their dress and cut to pieces all those who were seated at the table. This plan having been agreed upon, he

despatched *firdns* to the cities and provinces enclosing in each a list of the Mazdakites with orders to seize them all on the day of Mihrjān and throw them into prison. When Mihrjān came he commanded that a great table should be spread on the bank of the Tigris and he caused Mazdak to recline on a cushion and himself stood over him. At the table were seated two thousand Mazdakite missionaries and chiefs, and round Anusharwān was arrayed a bodyguard of a hundred men with swords hidden in their dress while the rest of the soldiery surrounded the table on two sides. Anusharwān had in his hand a battle axe (*tabarzin*) or as others say a halberd (*ndchakli*) he was the first to make these weapons and he devised them to smite Mazdak for he could not carry a sword. With one blow Anusharwān struck off Mazdak's head which fell into his lap whereupon the soldiers drew their swords and set on those miscreants and destroyed them to the last man. Whosoever of those curs was found in the realm of Chosroes was arrested on the same day. Such as he judged worthy of death he ordered to be killed the others he imprisoned or pardoned according as he deemed it advisable to deny them liberty or accept their repentance. Thus was the world purged of them. Then having collected their goods and all that Mazdak possessed of treasure gear and menials he ordered that whatever had been taken from the people unjustly either in the way of communism (*ibdhat*) or by violence should be restored to its owners and in the case of any goods baggage or property for which no owner appeared he commanded that this should be distributed and given to the poor and deserving or used for the defence of the frontiers. He did not let a single *dīndr* of all that surplus come into his own treasury nor did he bestow anything on his soldiers but expended the whole sum in good works. As regards the women who in the way of communism had fallen into the hands of strangers and had borne children if the husband wished for his wife she was restored to him while the children were given to those who most resembled them. When he had finished with the accursed Mazdak and his followers he turned his attention to the empire and the army. Notwithstanding the eminence

and wisdom of Buzurjmíhr, who was his Vizier, Anúsharwán arranged so that the secretary (*dabír*) of Buzurjmíhr, and likewise his deputy (*ná'ib*), should be able to have free access to the royal presence. With us this *ná'ib* is named the Keeper of the Keys (*kalíd-dái*)¹, he was called in Pehleví "Íránmázghar²," and he acts as the Vizier's deputy. The three ministers in the service of Buzurjmíhr were appointed by Anúsharwán himself, and Buzurjmíhr had no power to appoint them. What Anúsharwán intended was this: the secretary (*dabír*) was to acquaint him privately with the details of every letter written to great personages or sent to the outlying provinces of the empire, the Keeper of the Keys (*kalíd-dái*) was to give him a true account, face to face, of all that passed whether good or bad, and explain the ways and aspects of policy, and the deputy (*ná'ib*) was to watch over revenue and taxation. These three ministers were men of noble birth, intelligent, accomplished, eloquent, and efficient. Anúsharwán is said to have remarked on one occasion, "The Vizier is like the king's partner. he is invested with authority in government and finance, and these three persons are his hands and his tongue. The King, if he is prudent, will not fail to observe the actions of the Vizier." Again, with this arrangement, the Vizier cannot be defamed and calumniated, and the King is saved from needless anxiety, for if a letter was written accusing the Vizier, the King would question these ministers in secret, if they knew the truth, they would tell it, if not, they would investigate the affair and discover the right and wrong of it. The reason why Anúsharwán several times arrested Buzurjmíhr and detained him in custody was that whenever the Vizier conceived some vain project or was minded to play false, his plot was exposed by these three ministers, and the King then sent him to prison before the mischief which he had meditated was irreparable, only releasing him when he had no spirit for intrigue. Buzurjmíhr was of noble descent and a member of the royal House, wherefore Anúsharwán regarded him with greater suspicion.

¹ The reading is doubtful.

² Probably a corruption of Andarzghar = Counsellor.

In all matters Anusharwán made excellent dispositions. The Highpriest whom he appointed to preside over the court of justice was not surpassed by any of his time in nobility learning and piety and none except the Vizier was held in such reverence as he. Each of the King's ministers was an eminent man of noble race and ancestry and learned withal who had no superior. Anusharwán took the utmost care that his courtiers including his secretary and his chamberlain should be acute talented eloquent and intelligent beyond all others. The Chamberlain he said is the tongue with which the King speaks to those near him and the Secretary is the tongue with which he speaks to those far from him these two ought to be more accomplished and sensible and sagacious than all other men in the world. The Head of the Post and Secret Intelligence held in his own right an office of great dignity and was an accomplished nobleman a master of the pen and perfect in knowledge. Moreover in every province Anusharwan had many agents messengers and couriers to keep him informed of all that went on and of any new happening so that he might direct affairs accordingly. By his orders none but noble and learned men were appointed to office and he forbade that any base born person or tradesman or son of a retainer should be instructed in the secretarial art. To set forth all his institutions and reforms would take a long time. He looked into the arrangements concerning the land tax and found them extremely irregular. Hitherto it had been the custom that in one place the land tax amounted to a third of the produce in another place to a fifth and in some places to no more than a sixth and for this reason the cultivators were aggrieved. Therefore Anusharwan with the consent of the Vizier and the other notables introduced a system whereby the land tax was laid upon the people in the following manner.

Cornland A tax of 1 silver dirhem on every *garl* of land¹

Land producing rice A tax of 8 dirhems on every *garl*

Persian date palms A tax of 1 dirhem on every four trees

Dwarf date palms A tax of 1 dirhem on every six trees

Olive trees A tax of 1 dirhem on every six trees

¹ The *garl* or *jarib* is said to be 3600 square ells

The poll-tax was collected once a year from those who were liable to pay it, in three grades: 12 dirhems from the rich, 8 from the middle class, and 4 from the lowest. And when Anúsharwán laid down this rule for taxing the land, the burdens of the peasantry were permanently lightened and the kingdom became prosperous and his subjects with one voice bestowed on him the title of "The Just."

MU'IZZÍ

POET-LAUREATE of Sultan Sanjar, the Seljúk (A D 1092-1157)

115

O thou whose cheeks are the Pleiades and whose lips are coral,
Thy Pleiades are the torment of the heart, thy coral is the
food of the soul

In chase of those Pleiades my back hath become like the sky¹,
For love of that coral my eyes have become like the sea

Methinks, thy down is a smoke thro' which are seen rose-
leaves,

Methinks, thy tresses are a cloud in which is hidden the sun

A smoke that hath set my stack on fire,

A cloud that hath loosed from mine eyes the rain

Thine eye, by wounding my heart, hath made me helpless;

Thy tress, by ravishing my soul, hath made me distraught

If thine eye pierces my heart, 'tis right, for thou art my
sweetheart,

And if thy tress ravishes my soul, 'tis fair, for thou art my
soul's desire

In peace, the banquet-hall without thy countenance is not
lighted,

In war, the battle-field without thy stature is not arrayed

The banquet-hall without thy countenance is the sky without
the moon,

The battle-field without thy stature is the garden without the
cypress

¹ *I e* curved

My body is in pain from thine eye full of enchantments
 My heart is in sorrow from thy tresses full of guile—
 A pain that thy sight turns in a moment to pleasure
 A sorrow that thy speech turns in an instant to joy
 Thy face is a tulip for delicacy and pinkness
 Thy teeth are pearls for brightness and purity
 I never heard of pearls in honey laden coral
 I never heard of tulips amidst musk shedding hyacinths¹

116

If my Belov d—fair picture ¹ — My passion s grief and sorrow And if her glance tale telling From all the world my secret Twould seem as though I dwelt in If now and then my Sweetheart O that my food were made of That o er her in requital And O that she would never That with her cheeks my banquet	deigned but to look upon me were not so sore a burden had not revealed her secret would have been hidden always a Paradise of gladness along the road were passing her lips twin rubies only mine eye might shed its rubies! my banquet leave behind her might glow like beds of tulips!
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* AM'AK OF BUKHÁRÁ

A court poet He died in A.D. 1148

117

O paradisal beauty ¹ Sweet April hath apparelled The field flings down a carpet And pridefully the garden A picture of Khawarnak ² A satin woven carpet This like a Chinese temple That like the house of Mání ³	come fetch the cup of wine the world like Paradise of pictured tapestry puts on a crown of pearls parterre and garden seem mountain and meadow land splendid with China s art with lovely paintings hung
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¹ Musk shedding hyacinths : e dark fragrant locks of hair

² A superb castle on the Euphrates

³ The Manichaeans attached great importance to calligraphy and Mání (Manes) himself is believed by the Persians to have been an exquisite artist)

Lo, there the rich tiara	of gems on the jasmine-bough!
See how the queenly roses	unfold their broideries!
Roses like cheeks of houris,	laden with spicy curls,
Jasmines like lawns of Eden,	fragrant and beautiful
As 'twere a bride, the rosebush	arrays herself, the cloud
Tirewoman-like is laving	the dust and grime away,
Now round her neck arranging	a string of pearly tears,
Now drawing o'er her blushes	a veil of gauzy mist
Those tulips, where the cloud's eye	hath hid its weeping showers,
Well might'st thou call them flagons	of onyx filled with wine,
Or flashes of keen fire	in water, or bright waves
Of Badakhshání ruby	tossing in seas of Spring

ANWARÍ

THE most renowned of the Persian court-poets (died about
A.D. 1190)

118

Unless Fate rules the course of life entire,
 Why fall things not according to desire?
 To good or evil, as Fate pulls the rein,
 So runs the world, and all is planned in vain
 Day after day a thousand pictures pass,
 But never Truth appears in Fancy's glass
 "How? Why?" The Painter of these changing scenes,
 He works *without* a cause, *without* a means
 Our hands are impotent to loose or bind,
 Life's joy and sorrow let us meet resigned
 Beneath yon sky-blue dome our earthly state
 Hangs on the order of celestial Fate
 O Time, great lord of Nature! since by thee
 My body natural is held in fee,
 Why with such eager spite dost thou devise,
 Most ancient humpback! torments for the wise?
 No mind can reach thy revolution's cause,
 No eye discover thy mysterious laws
 From thy dark wheels what anguish o'er me fell
 Ah, 'tis a plant would take long years to tell.



FARÍDU'DDÍN 'ATTÁR

119

Yesterday a dear one asked me Will you sing of love again?
 Nay I have done with poetising fallen from my hand the pen
 Long in error's way I chanted lofty praise and satire stern,
 Now those days are gone behind me—vanished never to
 return

Love lay panegyric satire I was making all the three—
 Why? Because lust greed and anger dwelt unitedly in me
 Lust the livelong night tormenting evermore my sleepless
 brain

To describe a ringlet's crescent and a lip like sugar cane
 Greed all day in tribulation pondering o'er a scrap of verse
 Where from whom and how five dirhems might be coaxed
 into my purse

Anger like a wounded mongrel solace for his smart would
 fetch

Tooth and claw in sullen fury turning on some weaker wretch
 Since the grace of God Almighty shown unto his helpless thrall
 Hath unchained me from those harpies—so may He release
 you all!—

Love lay panegyric satire shall I make now? Heaven forfend!
 I have wronged enough already soul and mind 'tis time to
 mend

Anwarí beware of boasting!—Honour lays on that a ban—
 But when once thy word is plighted see thou keep it like
 a man

From the busy world retired dwell and seek the way that
 saves!

Very soon the last goes o'er thee of thy life tide's ebbing
 waves

*FARÍDU'DDÍN 'ATTÁR

As a purely mystical poet Attár (died *circa* A.D. 1225) is excelled
 in Persia by Jalálu'ddín Rumi alone. Besides a collection of
 odes his poetical works comprise many long *masnavís* of which
 the best known is the *Mantiku l Tair* this has been trans-
 lated into French under the title of *Le Langage des Oiseaux*
 by Garcin de Tassy (Paris 1864). He also wrote in prose the
Tadhkiratu f Auliya the oldest Legend of the Moslem Saints

that is extant in Persian Of its interest to students of mysticism the specimens given below may perhaps be considered a sufficient indication

120

From the Life of Rábi'a al-'Adawíya

Once in the season of spring she went into her chamber and bowed her head in meditation Her handmaid said, "O mistress, come forth that thou mayst behold the wondrous works of God!" "Nay," she answered, "do thou come within, that thou mayst behold their Maker Contemplation of the Maker hath turned me from contemplating that which He made."

It is related that she once fasted seven days and nights, never sleeping, but passing every night in prayer When she was wellnigh starving, some one came in and left a cupful of food She went to fetch a lamp, but on returning found that a cat had spilled the cup "I will go," she said, "and fetch a jug of water and break my fast" While she was fetching it, the lamp went out She tried to drink in the dark, but the jug slipped from her hand and broke to pieces She wailed and heaved such a sigh that the room was in danger of catching fire¹ "O God!" she cried, "what is this Thou art doing to wretched me?" She heard a voice saying, "Lo, if thou wishest, I will bestow on thee the wealth of all the world, but I will remove thy love for Me from thy heart, for heavenly love and earthly wealth cannot meet in one heart O Rábi'a, thou hast a desire and I have a desire I and thy desire cannot dwell together in a single heart" Rábi'a said "When I heard this warning, I cut off my heart from every worldly hope For thirty years I have prayed as though every prayer that I performed were the last prayer of all, and I have become so detached from mankind that, for fear lest any one should distract my mind from God, I cry at sunrise, 'O God' make me busy with Thee, that they may not make me busy with them'"

One day Hasan of Basra and Málik son of Dínár and Shakík of Balkh came to see Rábi'a when she was ill Hasan

¹ Because the sigh came from her heart, which was burning with grief

said None is sincere in his claim (to love God) unless he patiently endure the blows of his Lord ' Rābī a said 'This smells of egoism' Shakīk said None is sincere in his claim unless he give thanks for the blows of his Lord Rābī a said 'This must be bettered' Mālik son of Dīnār said None is sincere in his claim unless he delight in the blows of his Lord Rābī a said 'This still needs to be improved' They said Do thou speak She said None is sincere in his claim unless he forget the blows in beholding his Lord

Abdu l Wāhīd son of Āmir relates that he and Sufyān Thaurī went to ask after Rābī a in her illness She inspired me he said with such awe that I durst not speak so I begged Sufyān to begin Sufyān said to Rābī a If thou wouldst utter a prayer He would relieve thy pain Rābī a turned her face towards him and replied O Sufyān dost not thou know who hath willed this pain to me? Hath not God willed it? Sufyān said Yes Then said she,

knowing this dost thou bid me ask of Him something contrary to His will? It is not right to oppose one's beloved Sufyān said What dost thou desire O Rābī a? She replied Why dost thou who art one of the learned ask me such a question? By the glory of God for twelve years I have desired fresh dates and never tasted them although dates as thou knowest are very cheap in Basra I am a servant and what hath a servant to do with desire? If I will and my Lord will not 'tis infidelity Thou must will that which He willeth in order that thou mayst be His true servant If He Himself give thee aught that is another thing

Rābī a said He that worships his Lord either from fear or in hope of recompense is a bad servant Why then they asked dost thou worship Him? Hast thou no hope of Paradise? She answered Is it not enough that we are permitted to worship Him? Ought not we to obey Him though there were no Paradise and Hell? Is not He worthy of our pure devotion? And she used to say O God! if I worship Thee in fear of Hell burn me in Hell and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise exclude me from Paradise but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake withhold

not Thine everlasting beauty!" A man said to Rábr'a, "I have committed many sins. if I were to repent, would God turn towards me?" She replied, "No, but if He were to turn towards thee, thou wouldst repent"

121

From the Life of Dhu 'l-Nún al-Misri

The cause of his conversion was as follows He received a sign (from Heaven) that he should go to visit such and such an ascetic at such and such a place He found that this man, having suspended himself from the branch of a tree, was saying, "O body! help me to obey God, or I will keep thee like this until thou diest of hunger" Dhu 'l-Nún began to weep The ascetic heard him sobbing and cried, "Who is this that pities one whose shame is little and whose sins are great?" Dhu 'l-Nún approached and greeted him and asked what he was doing He replied that his body would not consent to obey God but desired to mix with mankind "I thought," said Dhu 'l-Nún, "it must have shed the blood of a Moslem or committed a mortal sin" The ascetic said, "Do not you know that when once you have mixed with mankind, every evil thing will ensue?" "Thou art a fearful ascetic" "If you wish to see one who is more ascetic than I, climb this mountain" Dhu 'l-Nún went up the mountain and saw a young man seated in a cell, one of his feet, which he had cut off, was lying outside and worms were eating it. "One day," he said in answer to Dhu 'l-Nún's question, "I was sitting in this cell, when a woman passed by My heart inclined to her and my body urged me to follow her I put one foot outside. I heard a voice saying, 'After having served and obeyed God for thirty years, art not thou ashamed to obey the Devil now?' Thereupon I cut off the foot which I had set outside, and I am waiting here to see what will happen to me Why have you come to a sinner like me? If you wish to see a man of God, go to the top of the mountain" The mountain was so high that Dhu 'l-Nún could not reach the top, but he inquired about that ascetic and was told that he had long been living in a cell on the highest peak of the

mountain that one day a man disputed with him and declared that daily bread is gained by means of (human) effort that he then vowed he would never eat anything gained by this means and that after he had remained without food for some time God sent bees which flew around him and gave him honey. Dhu l Nun said My heart was deeply moved by what I had seen and heard and I perceived that God takes in hand the affairs of them that put their trust in Him and does not let their tribulation come to naught. Afterwards as I was going on my way I saw a little blind bird perched on a tree. It alighted on the ground. I said to myself, How does the poor creature get food and drink? It dug a hole in the earth with its beak and two basins appeared one of gold containing sesame and one of silver containing rosewater. The bird ate and drank its fill and flew back to the tree and the two basins vanished. On seeing this Dhu l Nun became altogether beside himself. He resolved to trust in God and was truly converted. Having gone some distance further at nightfall he entered a ruined building where he found a jar of gold and jewels covered by a board on which was inscribed the name of God. His friends divided the gold and jewels but Dhu l Nun said Give me this board my Beloved's name is upon it and he did not cease kissing it all day. Through the blessing thereof he attained to such a degree that one night he dreamed and heard a voice saying to him O Dhu l Nun! the others were pleased with gold and precious jewels but thou wert pleased only with My name therefore have I opened unto thee the gate of knowledge and wisdom.

They said Who is the gnostic? He replied A man of them apart from them.

He said There are three kinds of knowledge of God. Firstly the knowledge that God is One which is possessed by all believers secondly the knowledge derived from proof and demonstration which belongs to philosophers rhetoricians and theologians and thirdly the knowledge of the attributes of the Divine Unity which belongs to the saints of God those who behold God with their hearts in such wise that He reveals unto them what He revealeth not unto any one else in the world.

He said, "Real knowledge is God's illumination of the heart with the pure radiance of knowledge," i.e. the sun can be seen only by the light of the sun

He said, "The more a man knoweth God, the deeper and greater his bewilderment in God" because the nearer he is to the sun, the more he is dazzled by the sun, until he reaches a point where he is not he

He was asked concerning the qualities of those who know God He answered, "The gnostic sees without knowledge, without intuition, without information, without contemplation, without description, without unveiling, and without veil They are not themselves, and they subsist not through themselves, but in so far as they are themselves they subsist through God They move as God causes them to move, and their words are the words of God which roll upon their tongues, and their sight is the sight of God which hath entered into their eyes The Prophet, on whom be peace, told of these qualities when he related that God said, 'When I love a servant, I the Lord am his ear, so that he hears by Me, and his eye, so that he sees by Me, and his tongue, so that he speaks by Me, and his hand, so that he takes by Me'"

Dhu 'l-Nún said, "On one of my journeys I met a woman and asked her what is the end of love 'Thou fool!' she cried, 'love hath no end' I said, 'Why is that?' She answered, 'Because the Beloved is without end'"

122

From the Life of Báýazíd al-Bistámí

One day he was walking with a number of his disciples The path was very narrow He saw a dog coming along and turned back to let it pass One of his disciples blamed him secretly and thought to himself, "How can Báýazíd, who is the king of gnostics, make way for a dog?" Báýazíd said, "This dog asked me with dumb eloquence, saying, 'In the eternal past what fault did I commit, and what act of grace didst thou perform, that I am clad in the skin of a dog, while the robe of spiritual royalty hath been conferred on thee?' This thought came into my head and I made way for the dog"

It is related that he said 'A man met me on the road and asked whither I was going I said To make the Pilgrimage What money have you?' Two hundred dirhems Give them to me' he said for I have a wife and children and walk round me seven times this will be your Pilgrimage I did so and returned home

Some one went to the door of Báyazíd's house and shouted Whom are you seeking? said he Báyazíd' The Shaikh said Poor Bayazíd! I for thirty years I have been seeking Báyazíd and have not yet discovered any trace of him When this saying was repeated to Dhu'l Nun he exclaimed God forgive my brother Báyazíd! for he is lost with those who have become lost in God

He said 'I came forth from Báyazídness as a snake from its skin Then I looked I saw that lover beloved and love are one, for in the world of unification all can be one

He said 'I went from God to God until they cried from me in me O Thou I!

He said, 'Nothing is better for a man than to be without aught having no asceticism no theory no practice When he is without all he is with all

One day he was speaking of the Truth and was sucking his lip and saying I am the wine drinker and the wine and the cup bearer He said Thirty years the high God was my mirror now I am my own mirror — i.e. that which I was I am no more for I and God is a denial of the Unity of God Since I am no more the high God is His own mirror Lo I say that God is the mirror of my own self for He speaks with my tongue and I have vanished

He said For a long while I used to circumambulate the Ka ba When I attained unto God I saw the Ka ba circumambulating me

He said For thirty years I used to say 'Do this and Give this but when I reached the first stage of gnosis I said O God be Thou mine and do whatsoever Thou wilt

He said The gnostic's lowest rank is this that the attributes of God are in him

He said A single atom of the sweetness of gnosis in a man's heart is better than a thousand pavilions in Paradise

He said, "Gnostics are a boon to Paradise, and Paradise is a bane to them "

He said, "It is impossible that any one should know God and not love Him, and knowledge without love is worthless "

Báyazíd was asked, "What is the chief sign of the gnostic?" He replied, "That while he eats with thee he flees from thee, and while he buys from thee and sells to thee his heart is in the gardens of holiness, reclining on the pillow of communion "

He said, "Men learn from the dead, but I learn from the Living One who never dies All the rest speak *to* God, but I speak *from* God Nothing is harder to me than the pursuit of (exoteric) knowledge "

He said, "If the Eight Paradises were unfolded in my hut, and if the Two Worlds were offered to me as my fief, I would not give in exchange for them one sigh that rises from my soul at dawn when I remember my longing for Him "

He said, "People fancy that the way to God is clearer than the sun, but all these years I have been wishing that God would reveal to me as much as a needle's point of this way, and I have wished in vain "

He said, "All that exists is gained in two steps by lifting up the foot from self-interest and setting it down on the commandments of God "

He said, "This thing we tell of can never be found by seeking, yet only seekers find it "

He was asked, "What is the way to God?" He replied, "Leave the way and you have attained to God "

It is related that he was asked, "How didst thou gain this rank, and by what means didst thou win unto this station?" He answered, "One night in my boyhood I came forth from Bistám The moon was shining and everything was still I beheld a Presence beside which the eighteen thousand worlds appeared as an atom Agitation fell upon me and a mighty emotion overwhelmed me I cried, 'O Lord! a court of this grandeur, and so empty! Works of this sublimity, and such loneliness!' Then a voice came from Heaven, saying, 'The court is empty, not because none comes, but because We do not will, since it is not every one with face unwashed that is worthy to enter this court'" (

He said If I am asked in the place of Judgment why I have *not* done something I shall be more pleased than if I am asked why I have done something —: *e* there is egoism in every act of mine and egoism is dualism and dualism is worse than sin except as regards a pious act that is done upon me and in which I have no part

He said Forgetfulness of self is remembrance of God Whoever knows God through God becomes living and who ever knows God through self becomes dead

He said I wished to know what is the sorest punishment suffered by the body I perceived that nothing is worse than forgetfulness (of God) Hell fire does not inflict so much pain as a single mote of forgetfulness

Some one asked him why he did not pray during the night He answered I have no leisure to pray I am roaming the spiritual world and whenever I see any one fallen I help him to rise —: *e* I am at work within

He said Any one whose reward from God is deferred until to morrow (the Day of Judgment) has not truly worshipped Him to day since every moment of self mortification is rewarded immediately

He said Endeavour to gain one moment in which thou seest only God in earth and heaven

They asked his age Four years he replied They said How is that? He answered Seventy years I was shrouded in the veils of this world but since four years I have been beholding Him—ah do not ask me how! Time without vision is not a part of life

He was asked concerning the command to do good and shun evil He answered Be in a domain where neither of these things exists both of them belong to the world of created beings in the presence of Unity there is neither *command* nor *prohibition*

He said All this talk and turmoil and noise and movement and desire is outside of the veil within the veil is silence and calm and rest

He said Dost thou hear how there comes a voice from the brooks of running water? But when they reach the sea they are *quiet* and the sea is neither augmented by their in coming nor diminished by their out going

IBNU 'L-FÁRID

'UMAR IBNU L-FÁRID, the greatest of the Arabic mystical poets, died at Cairo in A D 1235 His odes, though few in number, are unique in quality The longest of them describes his inner life, sets forth the way to oneness with God, and depicts the nature of that oneness so far as it can be put into words From this poem I have taken the fine passage in which the relation of the soul to phenomena is compared with that of the showman of the shadow-play to the puppets which he, hidden behind a screen, displays in every variety of action The odes of Ibnu 'l-Fárid are discussed in *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, pp 162-266

123

Let passion's swelling tide my senses drown!
 Pity love's fuel, this long-smouldering heart,
 Nor answer with a frown,
 When I would fain behold Thee as Thou art,
 "Thou shalt not see Me¹" O my soul, keep fast
 The pledge thou gav'st endure unfaltering to the last!
 For Love is life, and death in love the Heaven
 Where all sins are forgiven
 To those before and after and of this day,
 That witnesseth my tribulation, say,
 "By me be taught, me follow, me obey,
 And tell my passion's story through wide East and West"
 With my Beloved I alone have been
 When secrets tenderer than evening airs
 Passed, and the Vision blest
 Was granted to my prayers,
 That crowned me, else obscure, with endless fame,
 The while amazed between
 His beauty and His majesty
 I stood in silent ecstasy,
 Revealing that which o'er my spirit went and came
 Lo, in His face commingled
 Is every charm and grace,
 The whole of Beauty singled
 Into a perfect face
 Beholding Him would cry,
 "There is no God but He, and He is the most High!"

¹ As God said to Moses (Koran, VII, 139)

124

Where eyes encounter souls in battle fray
I am the murdered man whom twas no crime to slay
At the first look ere love in me arose
To that all glorious beauty I was vowed
God bless a racked heart crying
And lids that passion will not let me close
And ribs worn thin
Their crookedness wellnigh to straightness shaped
By the glow within
And seas of tears whence I had never scaped
But for the fire of sighing!
How sweet are maladies which hide
Me from myself my loyal proofs to Love!
Though after woeful eve came woeful dawn
It could not move
Once to despair my spirit I never cried
To Agony Begone!
I yearn to every heart that passion shook
And every tongue that love made voluble
And every deaf ear stopped against rebuke
And every lid not dropped in slumbers dull
Out on a love that hath no melting eyes!
Out on a flame from which no rapture flies!

125

Feign coy disdain for well art thou entitled
And domineer for Beauty hath given thee power
Thine is the word then will whatso thou wilt
Since over me Beauty hath made thee ruler
If in death I shall be with thee united
Hasten it on so may I be thy ransom!
And try in all ways thou deemst good my passion
For where thy pleasure is my choice attends it
Whate'er betide thou to myself art nearer
Than I since but for thee I had not existed
Not of thy peers am I enough of glory
That loving thee I bow in lowly worship

And though I claim not 'twere too high relation
 Favour with thee, and thou in truth my Master,
 Yet me sufficeth to be thought to love thee
 And counted by my folk amongst thy slain ones
 Yea, in this tribe thou own'st a dead man, living
 Through thee, who found it sweet to die for love's sake,
 A slave and chattel who never pined for freedom
 Nor, hadst thou left, would let thee leave him lonely,
 Whom beauty veiled by awe doth so enravish,
 He feels delicious even that veil of torment,
 When thou, brought nigh to him by hope's assurance,
 Art borne afar by fear of sundering darkness.
 Now, by his ready advance when thee he visits,
 By his alarmed retreat when thou affright'st him,
 I swear mine heart is melted oh, allow it
 To crave thee whilst it hath of hope a remnant,
 Or bid sleep (yet, methinks, 'twill disobey thee,
 Obedient else) pass o'er mine eyelids lightly,
 For in a dream, perchance, will rise before me
 Thy phantom and reveal to me a mystery

126

Lo, from behind the veil mysterious
 The forms of things are shown in every guise
 Of manifold appearance, and in them
 An all-wise providence hath joined what stands
 Opposed in nature. mute they utter speech,
 Inert they move and void of splendour shine¹
 And so it comes that now thou laugh'st in glee,
 Then weep'st anon, like mother o'er dead child,
 And mournest, if they sigh, for pleasure lost,
 And tremblest, if they sing, with music's joy²
 Birds warbling on the boughs delight thine ear,
 The while their sweet notes sadden thee within;

¹ "The forms of things," i.e. the puppets shown by means of the shadow-lantern, typify phenomena, which in themselves are lifeless and passive all their life and activity is the effect of the manifestation in them of the actions and attributes of Reality

² The scenes and incidents of the shadow-play arouse various emotions in the spectators

Thou wonderest at their voices and their words—
 Expressive unintelligible tongues!
 On land the camels cross the wilderness
 At sea the ships run swiftly through the deep
 And thou behold st two armies—one on land
 On sea another—multitudes of men
 Clad for their bravery in iron mail
 And fenced about with points of sword and spear
 The land troops march on horseback or on foot
 Bold cavaliers and stubborn infantry
 The warriors of the sea some mount on deck
 Some climb the masts like lances straight and tall
 Here in assault they smite with gleaming swords
 There thrust with tough brown shafts of quivering spears
 Part drowned with fire of arrows shot in showers
 Part burned with floods of steel that pierce like flames
 These rushing onward offering their lives
 Those reeling broken neath the shame of rout
 And catapults thou seest hurling stones
 Against strong fortresses and citadels
 To ruin them And apparitions strange
 Of naked viewless spirits thou mayst espy¹
 That wear no friendly shape of humankind
 For genies love not men

And in the stream
 The fisher casts his net and draws forth fish
 And craftily the fowler sets a snare
 That hungry birds may fall in it for corn
 And ravening monsters wreck the ships at sea
 And lions in the jungle rend their prey
 And in the air some birds and in the wilds
 Some animals hunt others And thou seest
 Many a form besides whose names I pass
 Putting my trust in samples choice tho few
 Regard now what is this that lingers not
 Before thine eye and in a moment fades

¹ The genies (*Jinn*) are described as ethereal creatures endowed with speech transparent (so that they are normally invisible) and capable of assuming various shapes

All thou beholdest is the act of one
 In solitude, but closely veiled is he
 Let him but lift the screen, no doubt remains
 The forms are vanished, he alone is all,
 And thou, illumined, knowest that by his light
 Thou find'st his actions in the senses' night.

IBNU 'L-'ARABĪ

NONE of the Mohammedan mystics is more celebrated than Muhyi'ddīn Ibnu 'l-'Arabī, who was born in A D 1165 at Murcia in Spain and died in A D 1240 at Damascus. He was a most prolific and original writer and exerted a profound influence on Moslem and, to some extent, on medieval Christian religious philosophy *e g* on the speculations of "the Illuminated Doctor," Raymond Lull.

127

When God willed in respect of His Beautiful Names (attributes), which are beyond enumeration, that their essences or if you wish, you may say "His essence" should be seen, He caused them to be seen in a microcosmic being which, inasmuch as it is endowed with existence, contains the whole object of vision, and through which the inmost consciousness of God becomes manifested to Him¹. This He did, because the vision that consists in a thing's seeing itself by means of itself is not like its vision of itself in something else that serves as a mirror for it: therefore God appears to Himself in a form given by the place in which He is seen (*ie*, the mirror), and He would not appear thus (objectively) without the existence of this place and His epiphany to Himself therein. God had already brought the universe into being with an existence resembling that of a fashioned soulless body, and it was like an unpolished mirror. Now, it belongs to the Divine decree (of creation) that He did not fashion any place but such as must of necessity receive a Divine soul, which God has described as having been breathed into it, and this denotes the acquisition by that fashioned form of capacity to receive the emanation, *ie*, the perpetual self-manifestation which has never ceased and never shall. It

¹ See *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, p 82 foll, and pp 106-107

remains to speak of the recipient (of the emanation) The recipient proceeds from naught but His most holy emanation for the whole affair (of creation) begins and ends with Him to Him it shall return even as from Him it began

The Divine will (to display His attributes) entailed the polishing of the mirror of the universe Adam (the human essence) was the very polishing of that mirror and the soul of that form and the angels are some of the faculties of that form *viz* the form of the universe which the Sufis in their technical language describe as the Great Man for the angels in relation to it are as the spiritual and corporeal faculties in the human organism The aforesaid microcosmic being is named a Man and a Vicegerent He is named a Man on account of the universality of his organism and because he comprises all realities Moreover he stands to God as the pupil which is the instrument of vision to the eye and for this reason he is named a Man¹ By means of him God beheld His creatures and had mercy on them He is Man the originated (in his body) the eternal (in his spirit) the organism everlasting (in his essence) the Word that divides and unites The universe was completed by his existence for he is to the universe what the bezel is to the seal—the bezel whereon is graven the signature that the King seals on his treasures Therefore He named him a Vicegerent because he guards the creatures (of God) just as the King guards his treasures by sealing them and so long as the King's seal remains on them none dares to open them save by his leave God made him His Vicegerent in the guardianship of the universe and it continues to be guarded whilst this PERFECT MAN is there Dost not thou see that when he shall depart (to the next world) and his seal shall be removed from the treasury of this world there shall no more remain in it that which God stored therein but the treasure shall go forth and every type shall return to its (ideal) antitype and all existence shall be transferred to the next world and sealed on the treasury of the next world for ever and ever?

¹The pupil of the eye is named in Arabic *insdn* which also signifies man

By bringin(ḡ) them into existence

128

The believer praises the God who is in his form of belief and with whom he has connected himself. He praises none but himself, for his God is made by himself, and to praise the work is to praise the maker of it: its excellence or imperfection belongs to its maker. For this reason he blames the beliefs of others, which he would not do, if he were just. Beyond doubt, the worshipper of this particular God shows ignorance when he criticises others on account of their beliefs. If he understood the saying of Junaid, "The colour of the water is the colour of the vessel containing it¹," he would not interfere with the beliefs of others, but would perceive God in every form and in every belief. He has opinion, not knowledge: therefore God said, "I am in My servant's opinion of Me," *i e*, "I do not manifest Myself to him save in the form of his belief." God is absolute or restricted, as He pleases, and the God of religious belief is subject to limitations, for He is the God who is contained in the heart of His servant. But the absolute God is not contained by any thing, for He is the being of all things and the being of Himself, and a thing is not said either to contain itself or not to contain itself.

129

My heart is capable of every form:
 A cloister for the monk, a fane for idols,
 A pasture for gazelles, the votary's Ka'ba,
 The tables of the Torah, the Koran
 Love is the faith I hold wherever turn
 His camels, still the one true faith is mine

130

A diver, who essayed to bring to shore the red jacinth of Deity hidden in its resplendent shell, emerged from that ocean empty-handed, with broken aims, blind, dumb, and

¹ *I e*, God is revealed in different forms of belief according to the capacity of the believer. The mystic alone sees that He is One in all forms, for the mystic's heart is all-receptive: it assumes whatever form God reveals Himself in, as wax takes the impression of the seal.

dazed When he regained his breath and when his senses were no longer obscured he was asked 'What hath disturbed thee and what is this thing that hath befallen thee?' He answered Far is that which ye seek! Remote is that which ye desire! None ever attained unto God and neither spirit nor body conceived the knowledge of Him He is the Glorious One who is never reached the Being who possesses but is not possessed Inasmuch as before His attributes the mind is distraught and the reason totters how can they attain unto His very essence?

131

The child affects the father's disposition so that he descends from his authority and plays with him and prattles to him and brings his mind down to the child's for unconsciously he is under his sway then he becomes engrossed with educating and protecting his child and with seeking what is good for him and amusing him that he may not be unhappy All this is the work of the child upon the father and is owing to the power of his state for the child was with God a short while ago having newly come into the world whereas the father is further away and one that is further from God is subject to one that is nearer to Him

*JALÁLU'DDÍN RÚMÍ

THE leading mystical poet of Persia and founder of the Mevlevi order of dervishes He died at Konya (Iconium) in Galatia in A.D. 1273 Of the pieces translated the last three are taken from the *Masnáví* The rest belong to the collection of odes entitled *Diván* : *Shams* : *Tabriz* which he composed in the name of Shamsu ddín of Tabriz his spiritual preceptor

132

He comes a moon whose like the sky ne'er saw awake or dreaming
Crowned with eternal flame no flood can lay
Lo from the flagon of thy love O Lord my soul is swimming
And ruined all my body's house of clay'

When first the Giver of the grape my lonely heart befriended,
 Wine fired my bosom and my veins filled up;
 But when his image all mine eye possessed, a voice descended
 "Well done, O sovereign Wine and peerless Cup!"

Love's mighty aim from roof to base each dark abode is
 hewing
 Where chinks reluctant catch a golden ray
 My heart, when Love's sea of a sudden burst into its viewing,
 Leaped headlong in, with "Find me now who may!"

As, the sun moving, clouds behind him run,
 All hearts attend thee, O Tabríz's Sun!

133

Poor copies out of heaven's original,
 Pale earthly pictures mouldering to decay,
 What care although your beauties break and fall,
 When that which gave them life endures for aye?

Oh, never vex thine heart with idle woes
 All high discourse enchanting the rapt ear,
 All gilded landscapes and brave glistening shows
 Fade perish, but it is not as we fear

Whilst far away the living fountains ply,
 Each petty brook goes brimful to the main
 Since brook nor fountain can for ever die,
 Thy fears how foolish, thy lament how vain!

What is this fountain, wouldst thou rightly know?
 The Soul whence issue all created things
 Doubtless the rivers shall not cease to flow,
 Till silenced are the everlasting springs

Farewell to sorrow, and with quiet mind
 Drink long and deep let others fondly deem
 The channel empty they perchance may find,
 Or fathom that unfathomable stream (

The moment thou to this low world wast given
 A ladder stood whereby thou mightst aspire
 And first thy steps which upward still have striven
 From mineral mounted to the plant then higher
 To animal existence next the Man
 With knowledge reason faith O wondrous goal!
 This body which a crumb of dust began—
 How fairly fashioned the consummate whole!
 Yet stay not here thy journey thou shalt grow
 An angel bright and home far off in heaven
 Plod on plunge last in the great Sea that so
 Thy little drop make oceans seven times seven
 The Son of God! Nay leave that word unsaid,
 Say God is One the pure the single Truth
 What though thy frame be withered old and dead
 If the soul keep her fresh immortal youth?

134

Lo for I to myself am unknown now in God's name what
 must I do?
 I adore not the Cross or the Crescent I am not a Giaour
 or a Jew
 East nor West land nor sea is my home I have kin nor with
 angel nor gnome
 I am wrought not of fire or of foam I am shaped not of
 dust or of dew
 I was born not in China afar not in Saksín and not in
 Bulghár
 Not in India where five rivers are or Irák or Khurásán
 I grew
 Not in this world or that world I dwell not in Paradise
 neither in Hell
 Not from Eden and Rízwán I fell not from Adam my lineage
 I drew
 In a place beyond uttermost place in a tract without shadow
 of trace
 Soul and body transcending I live in the soul of my Loved
 One a Jew!

135

If there be any lover in the world, O Moslems, 'tis I .
 If there be any believer, infidel, or Christian hermit, 'tis I
 The wine-dregs, the cupbearer, the minstrel, the harp and
 the music,
 The beloved, the candle, the drink and the joy of the drunken
 'tis I
 The two-and-seventy creeds and sects in the world
 Do not really exist I swear by God that every creed and
 sect 'tis I
 Earth and air and water and fire knowest thou what they
 are?
 Earth and air and water and fire, nay, body and soul too
 'tis I
 Truth and falsehood, good and evil, ease and difficulty from
 first to last,
 Knowledge and learning and asceticism and piety and faith
 'tis I
 The fire of Hell, be assured, with its flaming limbos,
 Yes, and Paradise and Eden and the houris 'tis I
 This earth and heaven with all that they hold,
 Angels, peris, genies, and mankind 'tis I

136

Up, O ye lovers, and away! 'Tis time to leave the world
 for aye
 Hark, loud and clear from heaven the drum of parting calls
 let none delay!
 The cameleer hath risen amain, made ready all the camel-
 train,
 And quittance now desires to gain. why sleep ye, travellers,
 I pray?
 Behind us and before there swells the din of parting and of
 bells,
 To shoreless Space each moment sails a disembodied spirit
 away

From yonder starry lights and through those curtain awnings
 darkly blue
 Mysterious figures float in view all strange and secret things
 display
 From this orb wheeling round its pole a wondrous slumber
 o'er thee stole
 O weary life that weigheth naught O sleep that on my soul
 dost weigh!
 O heart toward thy heart's love wend and O friend, fly
 toward the Friend
 Be wakeful watchman to the end drowse seemingly no
 watchman may

137

Happy the moment when we are seated in the palace thou
 and I
 With two forms and with two figures but with one soul
 thou and I
 The colours of the grove and the voice of the birds will
 bestow immortality
 At the time when we come into the garden thou and I
 The stars of heaven will come to gaze upon us
 We shall show them the moon herself thou and I
 Thou and I individuals no more shall be mingled in ecstasy
 Joyful and secure from foolish babble thou and I
 All the bright plumed birds of heaven will devour their
 hearts with envy
 In the place where we shall laugh in such a fashion thou and I
 This is the greatest wonder that thou and I sitting here in
 the same nook,
 Are at this moment both in Irák and Khurasan thou and I

138

Why wilt thou dwell in mouldy cell a captive O my heart?
 Speed speed the flight! a nursling bright of yonder world
 thou art
 He bids thee rest upon his breast he flings the veil away
 Thy home wherefore make evermore this mansion of decay?

Oh, contemplate thy true estate, enlarge thyself, and rove
From this dark world, thy prison, whirled to that celestial
grove

O honoured guest at Love's high feast, O bird of the angel-
sphere,

'Tis cause to weep if thou wilt keep thy habitation here
A voice at morn to thee is bornc God whispers to the soul
"If on the way the dust thou lay, thou soon wilt gain the
goal "

That road be thine toward the Shrine¹ and lo, in bush and
briar

The many slain by love and pain in flower of young desire,
Who on the track fell wounded back, and saw not ere the end
A ray of bliss, a touch, a kiss, a token of the Friend¹

139

He is the source of evil, as thou sayest,
Yet evil hurts Him not To make that evil
Denotes in Him perfection Hear from me
A parable The heavenly Artist paints
Beautiful shapes and ugly in one picture
The loveliest women in the land of Egypt
Gazing on youthful Joseph amorously;
And lo, another scene by the same hand,
Hell-fire and Iblís with his hideous crew.
Both master-works, created for good ends,
To show His perfect wisdom and confound
The sceptics who deny His mastery
Could He not evil make, He would lack skill
Therefore He fashions infidel alike
And Moslem true, that both may witness bear
To Him, and worship One Almighty Lord

140

Fools buy false coins because they are like the true
If in the world no genuine minted coin
Were current, how would forgers pass the false?
Falsehood were nothing unless truth were there

To make it specious 'Tis the love of right
 Lures men to wrong Let poison but be mixed
 With sugar they will cram it into their mouths
 Oh cry not that all creeds are vain! Some scent
 Of truth they have else they would not beguile
 Say not, How utterly fantastical!
 No fancy in the world is all untrue
 Amongst the crowd of dervishes hides one
 One true fakir Search well and thou wilt find!

141

I died as mineral and became a plant
 I died as plant and rose to animal
 I died as animal and I was man
 Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
 Yet once more I shall die as man to soar
 With angels blest but even from angelhood
 I must pass on all except God doth perish
 When I have sacrificed my angel soul
 I shall become what no mind e'er conceived
 Oh let me not exist! for Non existence
 Proclaims in organ tones *To Him we shall return*¹

*SA'DÍ OF SHÍRÁZ

THE author of the *Gulistán* and *Bustán* is too well known to require an introduction here His character has been admirably sketched by Professor Browne (*Literary History of Persia* vol II p 530 foll) who remarks that his real charm and the secret of his popularity lie not in his consistency but in his catholicity in his works is matter for every taste the highest and the lowest It might be added that whatever he touches either in prose or verse he has the art of making it as agreeable as is possible

With noble pity old Firdausi sings
 The fate of heroes and the fall of kings
 Nizami next did warmer genius move
 To paint the subtle lunacy of love
 Till Sa dī took the pencil and began
 A vaster theme a worthier subject—Man

O full of human wisdom, happy sage,
 A Persian Horace, mingling on thy page,
 Where childhood learns to read, age reads to learn,
 Moral with gay and tale with truth in turn,
 Which, as we read, our fancy so beguile,
 The matter pleases for the golden style,
 A style that softly winning, simply drest,
 Endears the topic and refines the jest¹

Sa'dí died in A D 1291 I have translated part of the preface to the *Gulistán*, a vivid passage of autobiography from the *Bústán*, and a few of the Odes Sa'dí's odes, which are now being edited by Sir Lucas King, are graceful and attractive but not to be compared, in my opinion, with those of Háfiz Even in his lyrical poetry, he often reminds us that he was less a dervish and mystic than a moralist and man of the world

142

The Preface to the Gulistán (Rose-garden)

In the name of God the merciful and compassionate
 Praise to the great and glorious God¹ We approach Him by
 worship and increase our blessings by thanksgiving Every
 breath, as it is drawn in, helps to sustain life, and in being
 sent forth exhilarates the body, so that in every breathing
 are two blessings, and for each blessing an acknowledgement
 is due

Whose hand or tongue may quit the fee,
 O Lord, of thanksgiving to Thee²

The showers of His infinite mercy reach every place, and
 everywhere is spread the table of His unstinted grace, He
 does not rend the veil of His servants' honour albeit foul sin
 they devise, or withhold the daily bread of His creatures
 for a trespass hateful in His eyes

O bounteous Giver, from whose hidden store
 To Guebre and Christian nourishment descends,
 If thus Thine enemies are provided for,
 How canst Thou ever disappoint Thy friends?

¹ These lines were written about twenty-five years ago when I had begun a translation of the *Gulistan*, which is likely to remain unfinished

At His word the zephyr unfolds a carpet of emerald on the plain and the tender plants in their earthen cradle are nursed by the rain the trees to celebrate the New Year in richly woven silk are gowned and the young boughs garlanded with blossom when the Spring Festival comes round by His might the juice of the vine exceedeth honey in balm and the date stone by the blessing of His up bringing towers into the palm

For us to earn our bread the cloud the breeze
Sun moon and sky with busy motion toil
That we may eat remembering God the while
Should Man serve less obediently than these?

'Tis delivered in tradition from the principal of beings the pride of creation the mercy of mankind the quintessence of mortality the completer of the cycle of prophecy Mohammed the Chosen—God bless him and give him peace!—that when ever a sinful wretch lifts up his hands in supplication to the court of God Almighty He regards him not Again he cries out and again God turns away Yet again he cries out with humble entreaty and lamentation the Lord saith O Mine angels I am ashamed before My servant for he hath none other but Me Verily I have pardoned him

Look now the Lord's sweet charity!
His servant sins ashamed is He

They that are vowed to the Temple of His glory confess the shortcoming of their devotion saying We have not worshipped Thee duly and they that laud the splendour of His beauty fall into bewilderment saying We have not known Thee truly

Ask me not His description! Nay for how
How might I senseless of the Signless speak?
We lovers are the slain of the Beloved
'Tis idle of the slain a voice to seek

A certain mystic had bowed his head in holy meditation and plunged deep in the sea of divine vision When he came back to himself one of his companions said pleasantly
What gift dost thou bring to us from the garden where

thou hast been?" He answered, "It was in my mind, when I saw the rose-bush, to fill my skirt with roses and bring them home to you, but their perfume so enraptured me that my skirt slipped from my hand "

O nightingale, learn of the moth to love,
That shrivels in the flame without a sigh
They know not Thee, whom they pretend it of,
Who knows indeed, knows naught eternally.
Beyond imagination Thou dost move,
Higher than all is said, writ, heard of high,
And so, when life has ebbed and we depart,
The first poor line of Thee is all our art

The Author says of his reason for making this book

One evening I was thinking over bygone days and regretting a life wasted in foolish ways, piercing the stone of my heart with the diamond of tears, and reciting these verses which the occasion commended to mine ears:

Each moment steals a breath of life once more,
And few, I see, are now remaining o'er
What! Fifty years by lethargy possessed!
Yet mayst thou realise the fleeting rest
Shame on the unready traveller, who is racked
When drum-call finds him with his load unpacked,
Or, though his journey might have been begun,
Lies fast asleep beneath the rising sun
Successive mortals each a fabric build
And vacant leave to others what they filled;
In turn those others like ambition fires,
But none at last accomplished his desires
Ah, dote not on the World the treacherous jade
To merit true affection is not made
How transitory is peace amongst the four
Unbridled humours, with themselves at war!
And if so be that one the mastery win,
Up flies the fair soul to her heavenly kin
Can wise hearts ever take the world to wife?
Can pure minds linger in the embrace of life?
Since good with evil must go down to earth,

Happy are they who shine in modest worth
 Oh send provision for the life to come
 (For none will bring it after) to thy tomb!
 Good man be not deceived Like summer snow
 Thy days are melting thou hast few to go
 And if to market empty hands thou bear
 Thou lt fetch no turban home alas from there
 Who eats his corn whilst yet the blade is green
 At harvest he a crop of husks will glean
 To Sa dí s counsel lend a heedful ear
 This is the way Step forward! Never fear!

Having considered of the matter I resolved to make solitude my vocation and withdraw from conversation to blot out the record of my vanities and speak no further inanities

Better sit dumb and deaf aside
 Than wag a tongue thou canst not guide

I had a bosom friend who bore in my sorrows an equal share and companioned me in care It chanced that he came to see me as he was in the way of doing but although his mirth would have invited me and his playfulness delighted me I answered not so much as yea and nay nor lifted my head from the knees of devotion where it lay He eyed me askance and said

Speak brother now
 Amiably cheerfully
 Before speech fails thee
 To morrow thou
 Silent perforce wilt be
 When grim Death hails thee

One of my retainers informed him exactly how the case was that I designed and had a fixed mind to pass the remnant of my days in sedulous piety deeming silence the best society So he continued take thine own road if thou canst do it and keep aloof or thou wilt rue it By the glory of God cried he and by our long intimacy I will not draw breath or flinch a single inch until he speaks to me in the familiar tone and the

fashion well-known, for 'tis churlish to vex the heart of a friend, while a broken vow is easy to mend, and 'tis the judgment of fools and contrary to wisdom's rules that the sword of 'Alí rust in its sheath, or Sa'dí's tongue stick to his teeth

Unless the tongue shall have turned
In the lock of the chamber of mind,
Whether jewels or trinkets behind
The door, by none is discerned
Though 'Silence is good manners' teach the wise,
Try to speak when for speaking thou hast reason
These are two marks of levity to speak
At an ill time, and not speak in right season "

I thought it would be unkind to hold my tongue any more, and discourteous not to converse with him as before, since he was a congenial friend, and his love for me was unfeigned

With him alone thy quarrel be,
Whom thou canst put to flight or flee

We began talking and went a-walking 'Twas spring-time. the traces of winter's ravage were no longer seen, and the rose had returned to be queen. As it fell out, I abode that night with one of my friends in a gay parterre, where a ceiling of tangled boughs quivered enchantingly in the cool air It seemed as though on the sward pieces of coloured glass, small and fine, had been flung, and as though clusters of Pleiads on the vine had been hung At dawn, when the inclination to go was prevailing over the wish to stay, I saw him towards the city bent, with a lapful of roses, hyacinth, basil, and other herbs of scent "You know," said I, "that the rose will not endure, nor is the garden's promise sure; and sages have forbidden us to set our hearts on that which fades and departs" "What then?" said he I replied, "To furnish the time present with reading merry and pleasant, I can compile the Book of the Rose-garden Never shall autumn blast scatter its leaves away and the fury of October deform the loveliness of its May

In vain thou fillest a vase with roses
 From my Rose garden carry a leaf
 This blooms for ever the reign of those is
 Brief

At once he let the flowers fall and caught the skirt of my robe and cried A gentleman keeps his word That very day I jotted down a chapter on the social virtues and the customs of polite intercourse in a style that will be useful to speakers and will increase the eloquence of letter writers and when I finished the book there were still some roses left

143

I saw an idol in the town Somnát¹
 Bejewelled as in heathen days Manát
 And wrought of ivory with art extreme
 No fairer beauty couldst thou ever dream
 From every land come pilgrims to behold
 And venerate that effigy unsouled
 From China and Chugil the rajahs flock
 Hoping true kindness from that heart of rock
 Before that image mute and dumb withal
 The world's most eloquent beseeching fall
 In vain I asked myself in vain explored
 Why living men a lifeless shape adored

There was a Brahman who of me spoke well
 My friend and comrade sharer of my cell
 Him softly I approached and sought his ear—

Great is my wonder at the doings here
 How can a helpless idol so entrance
 And hold them fast in bonds of ignorance?
 No strength its hands its feet no movement own
 It cannot rise up if you hurl it prone
 Its eyes are made of amber tis unwise
 To seek fidelity in stony eyes
 At this my friend became my foe entire
 And he with anger blazed and I caught fire

In Gujarát The idol which gives its name to the town was destroyed
 by Sultan Mahmúd of Ghazna in A.D. 1025
 A goddess worshipped by the pagan Arabs

He told the priests in all the multitude
 I did not see a face that promised good.
 The pack of Guebres who Pá-Zand¹ intone
 Set on me for the sake of that old bone².
 Because the crook'd way straight and sure they deem,
 The straight way crook'd accordingly must seem,
 For though a man be wise and keen of wit,
 He is a dunce where fools in judgment sit
 Lost as the drowning wretch, I saw no course
 But to dissemble 'twas my one resource
 With savage enemy on vengeance bent,
 The path to safety lies in soft consent
 Loud I extolled the Brahman archimáge.
 "O deep interpreter and master sage,
 Me too this idol pleases with its grace
 Of form and beauteous heart-bewitching face;
 I find it marvellous in outward show,
 But of the inward sense I nothing know
 I come to these parts late and have less skill,
 A stranger, to distinguish good from ill
 But thou, who art as queen on this chessboard
 And chief adviser of thy country's lord,
 Thou know'st what meaning in this form may lie,
 Of whose glad votaries the first am I
 To worship blindly is to go astray,
 Happy the traveller that knows the way!"
 The Brahman's visage gleamed with joy on me
 He looked approval "Noble sir," said he,
 "Thou hast done right to ask, and none dare chide.
 They reach the journey's end who seek a guide
 Like thee, I have wandered much abroad, and ne'er
 I saw an idol of itself aware,
 Save this, which every morning from its stand
 To God Almighty doth uplift a hand

¹ Pazand, hyphenated above in order to indicate the pronunciation, refers here to the sacred books or litanies of the Hindus. The word is properly applied to an Avestic (Zend) transcription of a Pehlevi (Middle Persian) religious text

² The ivory image

If here thou wilt remain till night is gone
 Thou lt see the mystery at to morrow s dawn
 Here at the old man s bidding I remained
 Like Bizhan in the pit where he was chained¹
 Long as the Last Day seemed the night I stayed
 Amidst the Guebres who unwashen prayed
 And priests unused to water every one
 Reeked as a carcase rotting in the sun
 Methought I had committed some great sin
 The grievous torment so to linger in
 All night I lay with bosom sorrow riven
 One hand pressed on my heart one raised to heaven
 Till hark the drum s reveille in mine ear
 And voice of Brahman shrill as chanticleer¹
 Night as a black robed preacher risen to pray
 From willing scabbard drew the sword of Day
 The fire of Morning fell on cindery Night
 And in a moment all the world was bright
 As though mid negro swarms in Zanzibar
 Stepped sudden forth a blue eyed fair Tatár²
 So eagerly with unwashed faces poured
 From gate and court and street the miscreant horde
 Nor man nor woman in the town was left
 Not even a needle would have found a cleft
 In that pagoda s throng And there I stand
 Choking with grief by slumber half unmanned—
 When lo the idol lifted up its hand!
 At once from all a mighty shout arose
 Like to a raging sea when tempest blows
 Soon as the fane was emptied of its folk
 The Brahman smiling glanced at me and spoke
 No longer I perceive art thou in doubt
 Falsehood is vanished Truth shines clearly out
 Seeing him firm in ignorance and blind
 To monstrous fancies rooted in his mind
 I durst not utter any word of sooth
 From falsehood s champions one must hide the truth

¹ See p 89 *sup a*

² The original spelling of Tartar

When thou behold'st an iron-fisted man,
 To break thy fingers were a foolish plan
 I made pretence to weep, expressed my sore
 Contrition for the words I spake before
 Tears moved their miscreant hearts, and at the shock
 They yielded, as the torrent moves the rock;
 Toward me with low obeisance then they sped
 And took my arm and to the idol led
 I sued for pardon to that ivory form
 In chair of gold on ebon throne enorn;
 I kissed the despicable idol's hand
 Accurst be it, accurst the adoring band!¹
 For some while I the infidels did ape
 And learned the priestly doctrine's every shape
 At length they trusted me within the fane,
 So glad was I, scarce Earth could me contain.
 I bolted fast the temple-door one night,
 And darting like a scorpion left and right,
 Looked up and down, the ebon throne beside,
 Until a gold-embroidered screen I spied
 Behind it sat the attendant devotee,
 And in his hand an end of cord had he!
 The riddle was resolved, and plain the tracks
 As when for David iron grew as wax¹
 At once I saw that when he pulls the cord,
 The idol's hand is lifted to its Lord
 Ashamed to meet mine eye, the priest devout
 His foul disgrace thus turned all inside out
 Started to run, and after him I flew
 The rascal headlong down a well I threw,
 For 'twas most certain he would ever strive
 To murder me, if he remained alive,
 And fearing lest his secret I betray,
 Would not be loth to strike my life away²
 I slew the villain with a stone outright,
 For dead men tell no tales, then took to flight

¹ God taught David the art of making coats of mail (Koran, xxi, 80)

² Here I have omitted three verses on the folly of sparing a dangerous enemy when it is in your power to despatch him

144

Until thine hands clasp girdlewise the waist of the Belov d
 Thou ne er wilt kiss to heart s de ire the mouth of the Belov d
 Know st thou what is the life of him the sword of Love hath
 slain?

To bite an apple from the orchard cheek of the Belov d
 Khusrau and Shirin s mighty love is rased and washed away
 By tide of turmoil swelling high twixt me and the Belov d
 The champion whom in far war s field no paynim arrow slew
 His blood was shed by bow like fair eyebrow of the Belov d
 Gone is mine heart mine eye weeps blood and if my faint
 soul lives

Tis only that I may bestow its life on the Belov d
 Ay one day I will fling myself beneath his Arab s hoof
 Unless disdain and pride pull in the rein of the Belov d
 Howbeit in this quest alas I never win to joy
 It may be that my name will pass the lips of the Belov d
 Sith life must once be yielded up whatever fate befall
 Most sweet to die in Love s abode at the door of the Belov d
 Surely will I then bear with me this passion to the grave,
 And from the grave arise and ask the way to the Belov d
 All men cry out against the hand of hated enemy
 But Sa dí cries against the unloving heart of the Belov d

‡

145

Dear to me this lamentation though it melt my soul with fire
 For it passes the day somehow surely else I should expire
 Not so beautiful is Morning setting earth and heaven alight
 As the face for which I waited waited all this weary night
 Ah if I may see again that love enkindling face now far
 Thanks I ll say till Resurrection unto my victorious star
 If I shrink when blame is cast on me I play the woman s part
 Howsoe er the arrow pierce thee meet it with a manly heart
 They that hunger after pleasure needs must know the taste
 of pain
 He that hopes for New Year s springtide let him freeze and
 not complain!

Prudent harvesters of reason love's deep bliss did never learn
 'Tis Majnún reads Lailà's secret he whose wits in frenzy
 burn

Fling thy noose about another! Self-devoted here I stand
 Who would tie the foot of falcon long familiar with his hand?
 Lovers gambling all the goods away of that world and of this
 Are endowed with something precious that our sleek ascetics
 miss

Yesterday is gone, To-morrow not yet come Do thou waylay
 Opportunity, O Sa'dí! Make the utmost of To-day!

146

Lovers' souls 'gin dance with glee
 When the zephyr fans thy roses
 Ne'er melts thy stony heart for me,
 Mine as a sunk stone heavily
 In thy dimple's well reposes.

Life were an offering too small,
 Else 'tis easy to surrender
 Unto thee, who need'st not call
 Painter's art to deck thy wall:
 Thou alone dost give it splendour.

Better sicken, better die
 At thy feet than live to lose thee
 Pilgrim to Love's sanctuary,
 What car'st thou, 'neath desert sky,
 How the thorns of Absence bruise thee?

147

The heart that loves with patience a stone 'tis, not a heart;
 Nay, love and patience dwell of old a thousand leagues apart
 O brethren of the mystic path, leave blame and me alone!
 Repentance in the way of Love is glass against a stone
 No more in secret need I drink, in secret dance and sing.
 For us that love religiously, good name's a shameful thing
 What right and justice should I see or what instruction hear?
 Mine eye is to the Sáki¹ turned, and to the lute mine ear.

¹ The cupbearer

I caught the zephyr s fluttering skirt for sweet remembrance
 sake
 Alas I have ta en but empty wind where scent I hoped to
 take
 Who'll bring a message to my Dear that off in anger went?
 Go tell him I have dropped the shield if he on war is bent
 And let him kill as he knows how! for if no vision there be
 Of him the wide world seems a cramped uneasy place to me

148

O cameleer drive gently now! My soul s delight is fain to flee
 And takes away with her the heart which I before kept safe
 with me
 Here I remain unblest by her despairing and distressed by
 her
 Methinks a lancet pressed by her doth pierce my bones
 tho far she be
 With many a charm and spell I cried this inward ulcer
 I will hide
 Lo streaming o er the lintel wide my blood lets out the
 mystery
 My Friend departed in disdain and left me to a life of pain
 Dark fumes are mounting from my brain like coals of fire
 I burn ah me!
 With all her cruelty and scorn her pledges vain and vows
 forsworn
 Still on my tongue her name is borne and in my breast her
 memory
 Hold back the howdahs camel man! Chide not the tardy
 caravan!
 I soar beyond mine earthly span for love of that fair cypress
 tree

ABU 'L-BAKÁ OF RONDA

THE author of this affecting poem was a Spanish Arab who probably wrote it *circa* A.D. 1250 after the collapse of the Moorish empire in Spain. Seville was captured by Ferdinand III in A.D. 1248.

149

Spain hath been stricken by a calamity for which there is
no consolation, because of it Uhud is fallen and Thahlán
lies in ruins¹

The evil eye hath smitten her Islam, and so deeply hath she
been afflicted that in many provinces and towns not a
Moslem is left

Ask Valencia what is the plight of Murcia¹ And where now
is Xativa or where is Jaen?

And where is Cordova, the home of learning, in which many
a great scholar rose to renown?

And where is Seville with all her delights and her sweet river
whose waters are full and overflowing?

Noble cities that were the pillars of the land, and how can
the land subsist when the pillars are no more?

As a fond lover weeps at parting from his beloved, bitterly
weeps the glorious religion of Abraham²

For desolate countries forsaken by Islam and peopled only
by infidelity

Their mosques have become churches there is nothing in
them but bells³ and crosses,

So that the *mihdbs* (niches) weep, though lifeless, and the
minbars (pulpits) mourn, though wooden

O thou that heededst not the warning of Fortune if thou art
asleep, yet is Fortune awake!

O thou that walkest jubilantly, charmed by thy place of
abode is any man beguiled by a fair abode after the
loss of Seville?

That disaster made us forget those preceding it, and for all
the length of time it will never be forgotten.

O ye that ride noble horses, slender and swift as eagles on
the field of honour,

¹ Uhud is the name of a mountain near Medina, Thahlán, of a mountain in Najd (Central Arabia) By this hyperbole the poet indicates the shattering effect of the disaster

² Islam Mohammed declared that he was sent to preach the true religion of Abraham, which succeeding generations had corrupted

³ The *nakús* was originally a clapper of wood, such as is used by Christians in the East for calling to prayer

And bear keen edged Indian swords gleaming like fires
amidst dark clouds of dust
And chew the cud of ease powerful and glorious in your
homes beyond the sea¹
Have ye no word of the people of Spun?—yet all night have
riders carried their news to you
How long will the sons of the despised who are slain and
captive cry for succour and not a man of you be roused?
Why this estrangement between Moslems? O servants of
Allah ye all are brothers!
Are there no proud souls generous and of high courage?
Is there none to aid and champion the good cause?
Oh who will come to the help of a people once mighty but
now abased once flourishing but now oppressed by
unbelievers?
Yesterday they were kings in their dwelling places and to-
day they are slaves in the land of the infidel
And what if thou couldst see them stricken with consternation
with none to guide them wearing the garments of
ignominy!
Couldst thou but see them weeping when they are sold the
sight would dismay thee and throw thee into a frenzy
of grief
Ah betwixt many a mother and child comes such a sundering
as when souls are parted from bodies!
And many a young girl beauteous as the new risen sun
blushing like rubies and coral
The barbarian drags to shame by force her eyes weeping
her mind distraught
A sight like this melts the heart with anguish if in the heart
there be a Moslem's feeling and faith

*HÁFIZ

150

Sáki pass the cup and pour
Pour me out the balmy drink!
Love who seemed so light of yore
Underneath his load I sink

¹ The poet appeals to the Almohades in North Africa to come to the help of the Moslem kinsfolk

Quoth mine ancient Guide, who knows
 Every inn upon the way
 "Well for you if purple flows
 O'er the carpet as ye pray!"

Zephyr, quick! blow loose the knot
 Of my Sweetheart's tangled hair!
 'Tis the heart of all the plot
 Laid against my life, I swear.

Sea and storm and dead of night,
 Midst the whirlpool's ghastly roar.
 Ah, what know they of our plight,
 Happy loiterers on the shore?

In this mansion of Farewell
 Pleasure, ere it comes, is gone,
 Where a never silent bell
 Tolls "Arise and journey on!"

Hafiz, tired of blame and praise,
 If thy spirit longs for rest,
 Leave the world and all its ways,
 Clasp the Loved One to thy breast!

151

The writing on the pages of the Rose
 (For readers all are not interpreters)
 Only the Nightingale may understand

I murmured to my soul apart: "Suppose
 Thy throne o'er-canopied the universe"
 "Love, love endures, the rest is crumbling sand"

O Love, in search of thee whoever goes
 To Reason's school, goes farther and fares worse
 For him no face-to-face or hand-in-hand!

152

Love's hidden pearl is shining yet,
 And Love's sealed casket bears the same device
 As it bore of old,
 The tears with which mine eyes are wet
 Roll, as yesterday they rolled,

Roll as they shall roll to morrow
 Fraught with blood of sacrifice
 From the same fountain of eternal sorrow
 Ah could my heart but speak
 Or thou divine
 What passion flower is this
 That lent its colour to those lips of thine!
 What ruby blushes o'er thy lovely cheek,
 Dreaming of the sun's hot kiss
 In the darkness of the mine!
 Ah could my heart but speak
 Or thou divine!

153

My soul is the veil of his love
 Mine eye is the glass of his grace
 Not for earth not for heaven above
 Would I stoop yet his bounties have bowed
 A spirit too proud
 For aught to abase
 This temple of awe where no sin
 But only the zephyr comes nigh
 Who am I to adventure within?
 Even so very foul is my skirt
 What then? Will it hurt
 The most Pure the most High?
 He passed by the rose in the field
 His colour and perfume she stole
 O twice happy star that revealed
 The secret of day and of night—
 His face to my sight
 His love to my soul!

154

Fetch me wine! for the Fast month is o'er
 Name and fame are in season no more
 Dost thou hear? On this bench soon and late
 For a drop of thy liquor I wait

Too long I have burned in the fire
 Of repentance and barren desire
 O the smell of the grape! Jesu's breath
 To my soul it revives me from death

Let me drink, let me haste to make up
 Precious time spent away from the cup,
 Drink till Fancy knows nothing about
 What comes into her head or goes out!

Proud monk, spare me homilies, pray!
 I from virtue am far, far astray.
 Yes, but Heav'n to which thou hast no key
 Opens wide to poor sinners like me

155

Mortal never won to view thee,
 Yet a thousand lovers woo thee,
 Not a nightingale but knows
 In the rosebud sleeps the rose

Love is where the glory falls
 Of thy face on convent walls
 Or on tavern floors the same
 Unextinguishable flame.

Where the turban'd anchorite
 Chanteth Allah day and night,
 Churchbells ring the call to prayer,
 And the Cross of Christ is there

156

O Beauty worshipped ever
 With what sweet pain and joy,
 Hid from the world's endeavour,
 But seen by spirit's eye!

Alike in mosque and tavern
 Thou art my only thought,
 The hermit in his cavern,
 He seeks what I have sought

Belov d unveil the splendour
Of all the skies and spheres—
Let thy moon face so tender
Swim through my starry tears!

157

The calm circumference of life
When I would *fain* have kept
Time caught me in the tide of strife
And to the centre swept
Of this fierce glow which Love and You
Within my breast inspire
The Sun is but a spark that flew
And set the heavens afire!

158

Blame not us wild rogues and gay
As if *our* score *thou* must pay
Saint or sinner every one
Reaps at last what he hath sown
Am I given to wine or prayer?
Pardon that is my affair
If I from virtue fell to vice
My father lost a Paradise
Thou who bidd st me hopeless be
Of God s predestined charity
Dost thou know behind the Veil
Who laughs in bliss who weeps in bale?
Drunk or dry the world entire
Hath one Object of desire
Whether to mosque or church we come
Love is everywhere at home
On the tavern s lintel now
Resteth my devoted brow
Kneel thou too O critic dull
And knock some wits into thy skull!
Cup in hand let Hafiz die
Straight to Eden he will fly!

159

'Twas the birthday of the world this famous carouse began
 Devotion, piety, faith! and I so richly decayed!
 Tho' Love's strong wine hath wasted and left me a broken
 man,
 I build immortal life on the ruin that Love hath made
 Washed in the fountain of Love, that moment I took farewell,
 Farewell for ever, of earth and sky and the sum of things
 Fill me a cup once more! Fate's mystery I will tell,
 Whose face enravished my soul, whose scent gave my spirit
 wings

160

Wise men! beware of dealing
 In Life's vast house of trade;
 'Tis packed, from floor to ceiling,
 With goods of Nothing made
 Come, while on shore we linger,
 O Sákí, let not slip
 An hour of Time whose finger
 Points out to yon dark ship
 Laugh like the rose! What matter,
 This month of fragrant eves,
 Tho' autumn's blast shall scatter
 Our unregarded leaves?
 A Paradise of pleasure
 Bought with a world of pain
 Fie on the luckless treasure
 That I must bleed to gain!

161

Birds are piping on the boughs, the Zephyr blows a valentine
 To the Vintner, "Luck, old fellow! may you soon have sold
 your wine!"
 Listen, for to me this morning whispered low a heavenly
 voice,
 "'Tis the season of enjoyment come, make merry and re-
 joice!"

What I wonder to the Lily said the lovelorn Nightingale
That with all her golden tongues she cannot tell the mystic
tale?

We jolly brethren of the grape let none profane our feast
Saki cover up the flagon! Here he comes the canting priest
I will sing you songs again and you will wreath my head
But stay good Angel stay till cursèd Ahriman be fled
Cloister fare thee well! The Tavern calls me—there will I
reside

Washing down with honest liquor fumes of cant and airs of
pride

162

Pure wine and fair women
Are pits on the way
To inveigle the wisest
Who are moulded of clay

Am I a wild lover
A black listed sot?
My friends in the city
Bear names without spot

Oh enter devoutly
The tavern! This ring
Of toppers that haunt it
Have ear of the King

Despise not the dervish
Whose throne is the ground
The emperor swordless
The monarch uncrowned!

Beware! When high bloweth
The wind of disdain
Whole stacks of obeisance
Are worth not a grain

163

Till the scent of wine is forgot and the tavern buries its sign
I fling me in headlong worship before the Maker of wine

I have served Him ere the beginning of Time that never
 began,
 I shall serve Him ages and ages beyond the vision of man
 Pass not my tomb so proudly! A blessing waits on thy prayer,
 For the whole generation of toppers will flock to pilgrimage
 there
 Bitter they call thee, child of the grape, and load thee with
 shames,
 But to me thou art sweeter than kisses, thy name is the
 sweetest of names
 One, perhaps, with a scrupulous beard hath Folly to wife,
 'Tis we bacchanalian sinners unlock the magic of life
 Happy, thrice happy, who cannot tell at loving-cup's close,
 Whether head on the threshold or whether turban he throws!
 I knocked at Virtue's gate, but they drove me away in scorn
 Is Hafiz to blame, or the ruling star when Hafiz was born?

IBN KHALDÚN

IBN KHALDÚN, the great philosophical historian, was born in
 A D 1332 at Tunis and died, as Cadi of Cairo, in A D 1406 He
 stood far in advance of his age, and we must look for his successors
 not in the Moslem world but in mediæval and modern Europe
 Although the style of the *Mukaddama* (Prolegomena) is somewhat
 cumbrous and involved, the immense range of the author's know-
 ledge, the originality of his ideas, and his masterly treatment of
 the subject render his work indispensable to students of Islamic
 civilisation.

164

*Prolegomena showing the excellence of the science of History,
 establishing the methods proper to it, and glancing at the
 errors into which Historians fall, together with some account
 of their causes*

Know that the science of History is noble in its conception,
 abounding in instruction, and exalted in its aim It acquaints
 us with the characteristics of the ancient peoples, the ways
 of life followed by the prophets, and the dynasties and govern-
 ment of kings, so that those who wish may draw valuable
 lessons for their guidance in religious and worldly affairs

The student of History however requires numerous sources of information and a great variety of knowledge, he must consider well and examine carefully in order to arrive at the truth and avoid errors and pitfalls. If he rely on bare tradition without having thoroughly grasped the principles of common experience the institutes of government the nature of civilisation and the circumstances of human society and without judging what is past and invisible by the light of what is present before his eyes then he will often be in danger of stumbling and slipping and losing the right road. Many errors committed by historians commentators and leading traditionists in their narrative of events have been caused by their reliance on mere tradition which they have accepted without regard to its (intrinsic) worth neglecting to refer it to its general principles judge it by its analogies and test it by the standard of wisdom knowledge of the natures of things and exact historical criticism. Thus they have gone astray from the truth and wandered in the desert of imagination and error. Especially is this the case in computing sums of money and numbers of troops when such matters occur in their narratives for here falsehood and exaggeration are to be expected and one must always refer to general principles and submit to the rules (of probability). For example Mas'ūdī and many other historians relate that Moses—on whom be peace!—numbered the armies of the Israelites in the wilderness after he had reviewed all the men capable of bearing arms who were twenty years old or above that age and that they amounted to 600 000 or more. Now in making this statement he forgot to consider whether Egypt and Syria are large enough to support armies of that size for it is a fact attested by well known custom and familiar experience that every kingdom keeps for its defence only such a force as it can maintain and furnish with rations and pay. Moreover it would be impossible for armies so huge to march against each other or fight because the territory is too limited in extent to allow of it and because when drawn up in ranks they would cover a space twice or three times as far as the eye can reach if not more. How should these two hosts engage in battle or one of them gain the victory.

when neither wing knows anything of what is happening on the other? The present time bears witness to the truth of my observations water is not so like to water as the future to the past

The Persian Empire was much greater than the kingdom of the Israelites, as appears from the conquest of the latter by Nebuchadnezzar, who attacked their country, made himself master of their dominions, and laid waste Jerusalem, the chief seat of their religion and power, although he was only the governor of a Persian province it is said that he was the satrap of the western frontiers The Persians ruled over the two 'Iráks, Khurásán, Transoxania, and the lands opening on the Caspian Sea an empire far more extensive than that of the Israelites, yet their armies never equalled or even approached the number mentioned above Their army at Kádisiya, the greatest they ever mustered, was 120,000 strong, and each of these was accompanied by a retainer Saif, by whom this is related, adds that the whole force exceeded 200,000 According to 'Á'isha and Zuhrí, the troops under Rustam who were opposed to Sa'd at Kádisiya were only 60,000 strong, each man having a follower

Again, if the Israelites had reached this total, vast would have been the extent of their kingdom and wide the range of their power Provinces and kingdoms are small or great in proportion to the numbers of their soldiery and population, as we shall explain in the chapter concerning empires in the First Book Now, it is well-known that the territories of the Israelites did not extend, in Syria, beyond al-Urdunn and Palestine, and in the Hijáz, beyond the districts of Yathrib (Medina) and Khaibar

Furthermore, according to the trustworthy authorities, there were only four fathers (generations) between Moses and Israel Moses was the son of 'Imrán the son of Yas-hur the son of Káhat or Káhít the son of Láwí or Láwá the son of Jacob or Isrá'ílu 'llah (Israel of God) This is his genealogy as given in the Pentateuch The length of time separating them is recorded by Mas'údí, who says that when Israel entered Egypt and came to Joseph with his sons, the (twelve) Patriarchs and their children, seventy persons in all,

they abode in Egypt under the dominion of the Pharaohs the kings of the Copts two hundred and twenty years until they went forth into the wilderness with Moses on whom be peace It is incredible that in the course of four generations their offspring should have multiplied so enormously

165

That being so the rule for distinguishing the true from the false in history is based on possibility or impossibility that is to say we must examine human society by which I mean civilisation and discriminate between the characteristics essential to it and inherent in its nature and those which are accidental and unimportant recognising further those which cannot possibly belong to it If we do that we shall have a canon for separating historical fact and truth from error and falsehood by a method of proof that admits of no doubt and then if we hear an account of any of the things that happen in civilised society we shall know how to distinguish what we judge to be worthy of acceptance from what we judge to be spurious having in our hands an infallible criterion which enables historians to verify whatever they relate

Such is the purpose of the First Book of the present work And it would seem that this is an independent science For it has a subject namely human civilisation and society and problems namely to explain in succession the accidental features and essential characters of civilisation This is the case with every science the intellectual as well as those founded on authority

The matter of the following discourse is novel original and instructive I have discovered it by dint of deep thought and research It appertains not to the science of oratory which is only concerned with such language as will convince the multitude and be useful for winning them over to an opinion or persuading them to reject the same Nor again does it form part of the science of civil government *i.e.* the proper regulation of a household or city in accordance with moral and philosophical laws in order that the people may

they have it by instinct not from reflection and consideration

(3) The labour and industry which supply him with diverse ways and means of obtaining a livelihood inasmuch as God has made nourishment necessary to him for the maintenance of his life and has directed him to seek it and search after it *He gave unto all things their nature then He directed¹*

(4) Civilisation : *i.e.* settling down and dwelling together in a city or in tents for the sake of social intercourse and for the satisfaction of their needs because men are naturally disposed to help each other to subsist as we shall explain presently This civilisation is either nomadic (*badawi*) or residential (*hadari*) The former is found in steppes and mountains among the pastoral tribes of the desert and the inhabitants of remote sands the latter in towns villages cities and cultivated tracts whither men resort for safety and in order to be protected by walls In all these circumstances it exhibits the phenomena characteristic of a social state Accordingly the matter of this Book must be comprised in six chapters

- I Human society in general its various divisions and the part of the earth which it occupies
- II Nomadic civilisation with an account of the wild tribes and peoples
- III Dynasties the Caliphate kingship and the high offices of government
- IV The settled civilisation of countries and cities
- V Crafts means of livelihood and the various ways of making money
- VI The sciences and how they are acquired and learned

The tribes of the desert are kept off from each other by the authority of their chiefs and elders whom they respect greatly For the defence of their encampments against a foreign enemy each tribe has a troop of warriors and knights

owing to the rudeness of their manners their arrogance their high spirit and their jealousy of authority. Seldom therefore are they unanimous. But when they follow a prophet or a saint they are restrained by something within themselves their pride and jealousy depart from them submission and concord are no longer difficult. Religion brings them together it takes away their rudeness and insolence it removes envy and jealousy from their hearts. If there be among them the prophet or saint who urges them to fulfil the command of God and requires that they shall abandon their evil ways and cleave to the good and bids them be of one voice to make the truth prevail they will become completely united and gain victory and empire. Moreover no people is so quick to receive the truth and the right. Their natures are uncorrupted by vicious habits and free from base qualities and as for their savagery it is conformable and adaptable to good in consequence of its having preserved the original constitution of man (which renders him capable of accepting the true religion) and because it is remote from the bad habits and dispositions which stamp themselves on men's souls. For according to the Apostolic Tradition already quoted Every one is born with a capacity for receiving the truth.

168

Showing that empires like individuals have their natural term of life

You must know that physicians and astrologers declare the natural life of man to be a hundred and twenty years of the kind which astrologers call the greatest years of the moon but it varies in every race according to the conjunctions of the planets so that sometimes it is more than this and sometimes less. Those born under certain planetary conjunctions live a full century others fifty years or seventy or eighty and stargazers believe that all this is indicated by the position of the heavenly bodies. In the Moslem community as is recorded in Traditions of the Prophet life runs to sixty or seventy years. The natural life i.e. 120 years is rarely exceeded such cases as that of Noah (on whom be peace!)

In the third generation the wandering life and rough manners of the desert are forgotten as though they had never been. At this stage men no longer take delight in glory and patriotism since all have learned to bow under the might of a sovereign and are so addicted to luxurious pleasures that they have become a burden on the state for they require protection like the women and young boys. Their national spirit is wholly extinguished they have no stomach for resistance defence or attack. Nevertheless they impose on the people by their (military) appearance and uniform their horsemanship and the address with which they manœuvre. It is but a false show they are in general greater cowards than the most helpless women and will give way at the first assault. The monarch in those days must needs rely on the bravery of others enrol many of the clients (freedmen) and recruit soldiers capable to some extent of guarding the empire, until God proclaims the hour of its destruction and it falls with everything that it upholds. Thus do empires age and decay in the course of three generations.

•JĀMĪ

NURU DDĪN ABDU R RAHMĀN JĀMĪ (A.D. 1414-149) was in the words used by Professor Browne (*Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion* p. 507) one of the most remarkable geniuses whom Persia ever produced for he was at once a great poet a great scholar and a great mystic. The best apology I can make for the few brief extracts given below is the hope that they will cause the reader to seek full satisfaction in the book from which I have quoted.

169

The Creation of the World

From all eternity the Beloved unveiled His beauty in the
solitude of the Unseen
He held up the mirror to His own face He displayed His
loveliness to Himself
He was both the spectator and the spectacle no eye but His
had surveyed the universe

171

Shibli—God sanctify his spirit!—fell into a frenzy He was brought to the mad house and a number of his friends came to see him Who are ye? he asked They said We are thy friends He picked up a stone and rushed at them They all fled Come back he shouted hypocrites as ye are! Friends from friends take not flight or shun the stones of their despte

He is thy friend who wronged by thee his friend
The more thou harm st him loveth thee the more
Whom thou mayst pelt with stones and only make
His love s foundation firmer than before

172

What is Sufism? they asked Shaikh Abu Sa'id son of Abu l Khair He answered Put away all thou hast in thy head give all thou hast in thy hand and do not shrink from whatsoever befalls thee

Wouldst thou thyself from selfhood disembroil
To banish vain desire must be thy toil
Empty thy hand of all it closes on
And suffer many a blow and not recoil

173

The Emperor Nushirwán was holding an assembly on the day of Nauruz¹ or Mihrgan when he saw one of the guests who was a kinsman of his lift a golden cup and hide it under his arm He feigned not to see and said nothing When the assembly was about to break up the wine server exclaimed

Let none depart till I make search A golden cup is missing
No matter said Nushirwán for he who took it will not give it back and he who saw it taken will not tell Some days afterwards that person came to Nushirwán in new clothes and new boots Nushirwán pointed to his clothes as though to say I know what bought these The other raised his skirt and showed his boots as if he would add And these

¹ The spring festival

² The autumn festival

APPENDIX

As some readers of these translations may wish to consult the original passages either for the purpose of comparison or for any other reason I give here a numbered list indicating the source of the English version in each case. *Hamdisa* refers to the edition of Freytag with Librizi's commentary (Bonn 1828). *Delectus* to Th Nöldeke's *Delectus veterum carminum Arabicorum* (Berlin 1890).

- 1 *Hamdisa* 43 11 *Delectus* 41 3 2 *Hamdisa* 3 17 *Delectus* 45 10
- 3 *Hamdisa* 252 14 *Delectus* 46 16 4 *Delectus* 44 7
- 5 The *Mu'allaka* of Imra'ul Khaṣṣ in *Septem Mo'allakāt* ed by F A Arnold (Leipzig 1850) pp 11-16 vv 23-35
- 6 *Le Diction d'Imra'ul Khaṣṣ* ed by Baron MacGuckin de Slane (Paris 1837), p 25 v 16 to p 6 v 12 *The Diction of the six ancient Arabic poets* ed by W Ahlwardt (London 1850) pp 1-5-9 vv 1-17
- 7 *Ibid* p 22 vv 7 19 *The Diction* ed by W Ahlwardt p 154 v 47 59
- 8 The *Mu'allaka* of T rafa in *Commentary on ten ancient Arabic poems* ed by Sir C J Lyall (Calcutta 1894) p 43 vv 54-59 *Septem Mo'allakāt* ed by Arnold pp 54 56 vv 56-61
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